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A PRIMITIVE ARCADIA

PLATE 1.—IN THE JUNGLE, FERGUSSON ISLAND.

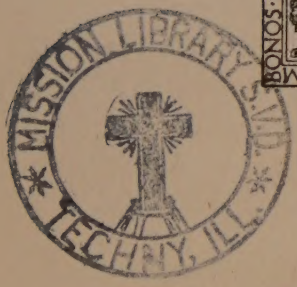
Frontispiece.

A PRIMITIVE ARCADIA

BEING THE IMPRESSIONS OF AN ARTIST IN PAPUA · *By* ELLIS SILAS, F.R.G.S.

WITHDRAWN

ILLUSTRATED



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TO

ERNEST WHITEHOUSE, A.R.M.

PREFACE

PALM-GIRT ISLANDS fringed by wondrous reefs, set in a sea of sapphire and intense emerald, and inhabited by coffee-coloured people wearing little or no clothes : this is the picture that the mind conjures up when one speaks of tropic isles. We venture forth, seeking our isles of enchantment, and we find these coffee-coloured people dressed in dirty garments and disgustingly aware of money values ; our search for the primitive life discovers a quasi-civilisation, a theory gone rank, the natural mixed with the artificial.

Yet there still remain a few golden islets, far out in the Pacific, as yet undefiled by this travesty of life which it pleases our conceit to call civilisation ; and it is with these that this book is concerned.

Look at the map, and when in your mind you have sailed round the south-eastern leg of Papua, turn northwards towards New Britain, leaving the Solomons away to the eastward. Half-way along the coast of New Britain—to be precise, in latitude 8° south—lie one large island and several small ones. This group of coral atolls is known as the Trobriand Islands.

To these islands, hitherto untouched by the artist's brush, I made two expeditions, in the anticipation of being able to portray something of the subtle beauties and extravagant colour schemes of this strange quarter of the globe, wherein Nature lays out her palette with an impartial hand, rioting in her imagination and contradicting many artistic truths common to other climes. We artists have, with a pretty conceit, complacently set ourselves hide-bound rules from which the more timid of us fear to stray ; but in this

country one must be fearless and ever watchful, for the pitfalls are many.

That I should find fresh subjects and themes I did not doubt, but immense was my surprise when I discovered these entrancing islands to be inhabited by a people who, although primitive, nevertheless possessed a remarkably high culture and a complex social system. That some of the tribes of the Southern Seas practise customs that may be called "not quite nice" is, admittedly, true; but the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands, on the contrary, are fascinating and vivacious.

It was not my intention to interest myself with the specialised research of the ethnologist: rather did I endeavour to avoid such knowledge, lest it should influence my mental vision to the detriment of my work as a painter; but, the exigencies of my work as an artist compelling me to live for periods at a stretch in the native villages, I got to know these Trobrianders not merely as a strange people with remarkable customs, but as individuals. I joined their banana parties, sat round the family hearth, listened to their latest scandals, watched the development of their love affairs, saw their squabbles and intrigues, and, in general, viewed the routine of village life from a close range.

Becoming thus associated with the sociology of tribal life, I was constantly led to inquire into the why and the wherefore, much to the annoyance of my house staff, and especially of my cook-boy (Dobu) who sought to evade my increasing importunities with the pertinent reply: "Oh, fashion belong New Guinea, Taubada."

This non-commital answer was at least less misleading than some of the information that I gathered from other sources. The doubtful information, however, came from men who neither understood the natives nor were very much concerned with their customs, habits and manners, and I strongly suspect that much of the exaggeration of their narratives was mainly caused by a desire to impress a

" new chum." On the other hand, information of considerable value was imparted to me by Government officials, traders and missionaries : for the rest, I was mainly dependent upon my own observations and the subtle and evasive statements made by the natives.

Naturally enough, some of my conjectures may be erroneous. But this book is not an ethnographical study ; on the contrary, it merely sets out to record the impressions of an artist. My objective is not to portray these remote people as specimens under the scrutiny of a scientist, but in order to convey a conception of things such as the transcendent sunsets, the violent storms ; the fascination, charm, and subtle magic, so ineffably poetic, of the nights in this world of realised dreams ; the witchery of the laughing eyes, the coquetry and artless abandon of the naïve and untutored people.

There may be those who will resent my animadversion of our existing civilisation, or at least of certain phases of it. But this is the natural consequence of my intimate contact with primeval nature. It leaves an indestructible impression that has stamped itself upon the consciousness of many who have lived in close contact with the people of the South Seas. Melville, R. L. S., Jack London, and others felt this influence, even although they, unlike myself, were unbiassed by the calamitous years 1914–1918, and their aftermath of violence and crime.

Life presents many facets, both beautiful and repellent. I selected for my theme the beautiful, touching but lightly upon the more sombre and perhaps forbidding characteristics of the Papuan. The quest for the beautiful was the impulse which inspired me in my effort to find a way through the tortuous paths and to overcome difficulties, while endeavouring to reflect, both with brush and with pen, something of the pulsating life so characteristic of the inhabitants of these isles.

ELLIS SILAS.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE

PAPUA IS THE NAME now given to that part of the mountainous island continent of New Guinea which before the war was known as British New Guinea. It is now administered by the Australian Commonwealth; but it must not be confused with the late German New Guinea, now mandated to the Australian Commonwealth.

Papua lies roughly in latitude 5° south, longitude 141° east, at its most north-westerly point, where it touches Dutch territory, and runs in a south-easterly direction to latitude 10° south, longitude 151° east, beyond which point lie a number of islands, scattered in the form of a long-drawn archipelago which continues its south-easterly direction.

The primary reason for Australia's occupation of these lands was strategical, for, in any other control, they might very easily come into the occupation of an unfriendly Power, and thus become a menace to Australia's safety. A glance at the map will show the importance of this little-known country to the Empire. As a business proposition, Papua is at present scarcely a financial success, but its maintenance must in the main be regarded as a part of our Imperial defence.

Little is yet known of this, the last great mystery spot on the earth, or of the tribes that inhabit it. The heart of the land still remains in obscurity. But it is assumed that the inhabitants of the north coast, as of the south-west coast, are of the relatively tall, dark race called Papuan, and the hills are inhabited by pigmies. The people of the Eastern Peninsulas are called Eastern Papusians or Papua-Melanesians.

It is this last race that inhabits the Trobriand Islands, which derive their name from Denis de Trobriand, first-lieutenant of *L'Espérance*, one of the frigates in the expedition of d'Entrecasteaux which visited these seas in 1793.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I DOUBT that I should have been able to accomplish my difficult enterprise but for the kind assistance of the Government officials, traders and missionaries, and other residents of Papua, to whom I offer my sincerest thanks; but more particularly to Ernest Whitehouse, A.R.M., and his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lumely. I also wish to thank the Trustees of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, N.S.W., the possessors of the original diary of my Papuan experiences, for their kind permission to make extracts from this work had I so desired.

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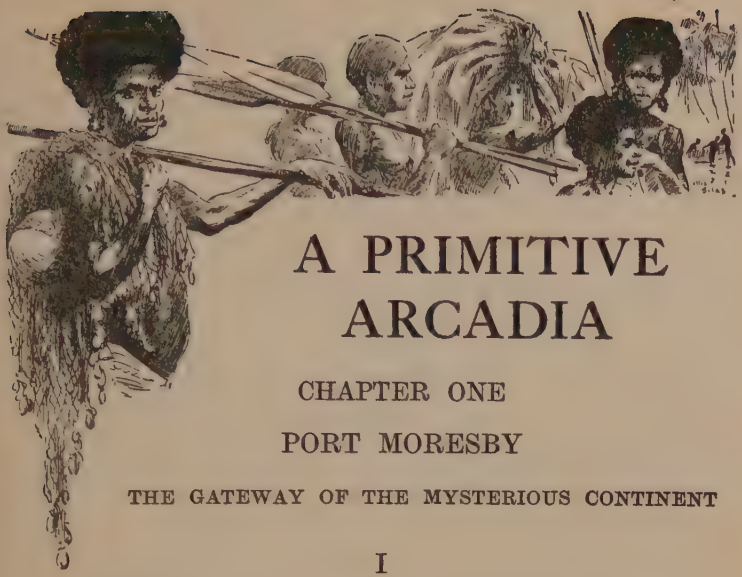

A PRIMITIVE ARCADIA

CHAPTER ONE

PORT MORESBY

THE GATEWAY OF THE MYSTERIOUS CONTINENT

I

I AM OFTEN ASKED : " What induced you to go to Papua ? Why go there for inspiration, or whatever condition of mind it is that gives you the desire to daub canvas ? "

My expedition was the result of chance, backed by a life-long desire to see the tropics : it mattered not to me that it happened to be Papua. The desire has possessed me ever since I first read R. L. Stevenson's vivid descriptions of *Coral Islands*, which fired my boyish imagination and led me for long years afterwards to picture seas of marvellous colours and islands where slender palms hung their heads over lagoons, whilst languorous maidens gave soft lingering glances from their half-shrouded starry eyes as they chanted strange melodies.

When, therefore, a friend who held the post of Resident Magistrate in the Trobriand Islands invited me to visit him, I felt that here was my opportunity. The invitation seemed a key to the door of a new world, remote from the trials of post-war civilisation, where everyone lives in overgrown cities and life seems to be regarded mainly as a matter of jazz bands, the movies and motor-cars. I was told there would be dangers. But after the experiences of a great

war and its aftermath, to venture into a savage and unknown country did not appear the hazardous enterprise which otherwise it might have done.

So eventually I found myself waiting to embark, with all my kit heaped upon the wharf. It looked a considerable outfit, and the number of porters required to put it aboard rather enhanced this effect, to the increase of my self-esteem and the impoverishment of my purse. For an expedition of indefinite duration, undertaken by a tyro, so much impedimenta was perhaps excusable, but as a matter of fact quite a quantity of it proved to be of an utterly useless nature, for I did not possess the remotest idea of my requirements. I knew that I was bound for the edge of the world; that in the white settlements there would be stores where one might purchase certain commodities, but what these might be was a matter of conjecture. And my conjecture proved itself badly at fault.

I must enter upon a brief description of the ships that trade between Sydney and the Coral Seas, because they are characteristic of "fashion belong Papua." The ship is one's first insight into the conditions which beset the traveller in the tropics, a gentle introduction, as it were, to what lies ahead.

The ship in which I travelled was a crazy old tramp of some 2,000 tons or under, built for trading between London and Liverpool.[1] With such an origin, it is natural that she was not constructed with due allowance for the ventilation needed in a tropical climate. She was a well-found sea boat; but that is all that can be said for her.

Her passengers included Government officials returning from leave; store managers; missionaries, some of whom were novices about to try their 'prentice hand for the weal or woe of the natives; a few mission sisters, with their adornment of spectacles, without which, apparently, no mission sister is complete; miners and prospectors, rough and uncouth; and a sprinkling of tourists about to explore

[1] More commodious ships have since been diverted to the Papuan trade.

the cannibal country from the verandah of an hotel; while native house-boys and nurses, attired in brilliant calicoes, lent a touch of colour to the scene and gave a suggestion of what lay ahead.

The after well-deck was cluttered with bales and boxes. Housed in a temporary wooden shelter were a number of sheep: meat supplies for Port Moresby and Samarai. The forward well-deck was littered with crates of poultry, bundles of hay, and last, but by no means least, the ubiquitous cases of kerosene and benzine.[1]

The passenger accommodation was limited. Ships trading to Papua have one class only, with a limited number of deck-cabins, and it was largely a matter of luck if you were so fortunate as to obtain a berth. The dining saloon was common to all: miner or Lieutenant-Governor, it was all one; you sat at the same tables, and grumbled at the same heat. This is well enough so far as it goes, but there are occasions when the mixing of class becomes slightly embarrassing. One of our passengers was a miner, of such a quiet and unassuming temperament that many of his fellow-travellers imagined him to be dumb. At Port Moresby, however, he sought refreshment ashore, and returned to the ship in such an elated condition that at lunch he burst into an adjectival eloquence which drew a request for greater moderation of language from the purser; whereupon his indignation burst forth in the retort: " 'Ere 'ave I sat the 'ole —— —— voyage and ain't spoke a —— word, and now when I do —— well speak I'm —— well tol' to shut me mug! "

But the limitations of the ship were of little account to me, for *mal de mer* kept me almost entirely to my cabin, until one glorious morning when I crawled on deck to find the ship within sight of land. It was a tropic day at its

[1] Every ship trading to the islands carries a large consignment of this highly combustible but very essential deck cargo, for out in the beyond it is the white man's means of light, while it also acts as fuel for the many auxiliary ketches and schooners which sail to the outlying stations.

best, with fleecy clouds drifting lazily across the blue of the heavens. As we entered the channel through the fringing reef that protects Port Moresby from the ocean, there was unfolded a wonderful panorama. The port is surrounded by high mountains, impressive yet forbidding, which tower up into the clouds, range behind range, vanishing into the purple haze. The country being volcanic, the lower ground is broken into peculiarly pointed conic formations, strange, uncanny and suggestive of recent upheaval; indeed, the whole contour of the landscape, although beautiful, bears a sinister aspect suggestive of hidden wickedness, both of Nature and of Man.

The town itself is a medley of corrugated iron buildings and villas scattered over the hillside, making splashes of dazzling white and strong red in the intense sunlight. The roads, such as they are, are undulated and broken, and exceedingly fatiguing for those that walk on them. There is one main street: on its left are stores, and two hotels which appear mainly to consist of verandahs, while on the left are several diminutive buildings of iron and wood, wherein are housed the Police Court, the Public Works and other Government Departments. At right angles to this main street run smaller streets which because of the precipitous slope of the land are *culs-de-sac*.

Facing the harbour, stand the concrete buildings of the Burns, Philp Stores, which seem out of proportion with everything else in this out-of-the-way spot. The waters of the harbour stretch out on either hand, a pool of topaz shot with emerald, cut across with a streak of hard black, which is the pier. Schooners and rakish ketches from out-back, grey, worn and dilapidated, rest idly at anchor or tied up to the jetties while they discharge their cargoes and take in new stores. The double-masted lakatoi, with their curious crab-claw sails of a rich brown tone, drift lazily along; while crude dug-out logs, without even outriggers but piled high with bananas from up the coast, are paddled across the

harbour. Along the pier rumble trolleys loaded with sacks of copra and other merchandise, and native labourers, with their dark skins and coloured calicoes, make blots of brown and patches of colour against the brilliant hues of sea and sky, the deeper tones relieved by the white raiment of overseers and ships' officers.

The town straggles away to the right, concentrating again into two smaller brown smears at the base of the rich green hills : the villages of Elivara and Hanuabada. Beyond, in a wide sweep, lies the bay.

In the streets, Europeans in white ducks appear to spend much time and energy in dodging between the various Government offices and the stores, while natives, some in the cast-off raiment of the white man, others in brilliant calicoes, others again in nothing more than a loin-cloth, sit gossiping in the shade of the stunted trees or go about their business as porters. Native girls go by, their palm-leaf skirts rustling like silk ; mothers carry their babies in nets slung behind them from their heads. It is a lively scene, scintillating with colour and animation and laughter.

This, then, is Port Moresby, the front door of Papua, opening to give the traveller his first view of the country from which he expects so much.

II

Port Moresby is the seat of the Government of Papua : a much criticised and often abused administration which controls a peculiarly difficult and dangerous territory with an extensive and inhospitable coastline, which makes, even when seas are calmest and skies serenest, landing on these shores a matter of extreme difficulty, and along certain portions of the coast, barrier-reefs, swamps and rocks practically prevent landing or even approach. There are innumerable rivers, but most of them are quite impracticable for navigation, and during the monsoons their deltas become

raging torrents carrying mud and debris to stain the sea for miles around their estuaries.

Climatically, Papua is far from being a health resort. In the lower country there are occasional periods of drought, but elsewhere rain is incessant. Cyclones and hurricanes are not uncommon, and earth-tremors are frequently felt.

The fauna is very much the same as that of Australia : marsupals, wild boar, large and small bats, wild dog and flying-fox being the only wild mammals. On the other hand, certain regions are infested by repulsive insects of innumerable species, and there is no lack of crocodiles or of snakes ; also in some districts there are the cannibals and head-hunters. Naturally it is all these things which make life in this strange country so interesting, and adventure a daily occurrence.

The flora is lavish in its beauty. Parts of the banks of the rivers are festooned with scarlet creepers : the effect of this dazzling colour, against the setting of the rich greens of the tropical vegetation, is truly magnificent, the sheer loveliness of it holding one spellbound.

The known part of this territory contains large areas of very fertile land capable of producing rubber, coco-nuts, cotton, sugar, bananas, hemp, and practically every known article of tropical produce. Many of these things have been, and still are being cultivated. Gold has been traced nearly everywhere throughout the occupied territory. Copper abounds, and some few miles east of Port Moresby, at Bootless Inlet, are very productive copper mines. The potential value of this territory is beyond estimate ; but the limiting factor for its development is the restricted supply of labour. The native population is estimated as between 200,000 and 300,000, of which a large proportion are still head-hunters, cannibals, or at least semi-barbarians, and from figures given it would appear that the limit of the potential labour supply would not exceed 25,000 ; while the climate, except on the high lands, is too hot and humid

for white labour to operate continuously. However, those engaged in planting industries are not at the moment concerned in this problem : their difficulty is to find sufficient money to pay for the labour which they require. The enhanced cost of running expenses owing to post-war conditions, coupled with the Australian Navigation Act, which compels planters to send their produce to Sydney and tranship, instead of shipping direct to the European markets, have crippled the planters, with the consequent retarding of the development of the country, and diminishing of the white population, though the absence of an income tax should be a sufficient inducement for them to remain.

III

One day I wandered along the road which skirts the coast in the direction of Hanuabada. The road was good enough, but the heat was terrific and I found not a vestige of shade. I could not even rest by the wayside, for when I sat or lay on the hard and jagged banks that bordered the road I was painfully reminded that I was wearing the thinnest of clothes, suitable to the climate but useless as a protection from pointed stones and boulders.

But at last I reached the Wireless Station and made my way to the cool verandah of its Mess. I dropped exhausted into a rattan chair, and behold ! to my delight there appeared before me the one refreshment that I most desired—iced beer ! Yes, iced !—for Port Moresby boasts a refrigerating plant that is carefully nursed by a Papuan native in consideration of the princely salary of £250 per annum. To a primitive savage such a stipend is a fortune, but nevertheless no one man holds the post for long. After a while he feels the call of home ; and no monetary fortune will keep a homesick Papuan from his native village.

Like most buildings in Papua, the Wireless Mess is built on piles. This form of structure gives the houses the

appearance of being perched on stilts, and to me seemed very odd; but it is essential in a country largely inhabited by white ants. The houses are built bungalow-fashion, with small rooms and spacious verandahs. A garden plot fronts each house, but horticulture in Port Moresby is a dispiriting hobby, since inevitably the South-East Trades will come and turn the whole district into a desert.

The Mess Room itself was constructed of deal boards, like the remainder of the house, and the walls were painted a dark green relieved with portraits of stage beauties and imaginary studies of English girlhood torn from the covers of magazines. Otherwise, the principal colour in the room came from an oil lamp in the centre of the table, and from two bowls of fruit—a decoration which only appears when the mail-ship has arrived, for fruit is unobtainable locally except for small quantities of bananas which are occasionally brought from sixty miles up the coast.

My hosts invited me to stay for *kai kai* (a meal), and I accepted with alacrity, my appetite being awakened by the noise of breaking crockery, a sound which in Papua usually announces the preparation of a meal, since cook-boys are slow in realising that china dishes do not bounce so readily as the wooden bowls to which they are accustomed in their own villages. On this occasion the cook-boy was but a recent acquisition and as the novelty of the game had not even begun to wear off, the sounds were even more persistent than usual.

When at last we trooped into the Mess Room, the dinner was served by two greasy and perspiring boys, naked to the waist, below which they were swathed in crimson calicoes that made a fine contrast to the deep bronze of their skins and their dark fuzzy hair. My hosts were well aware that the boys wiped the dishes on their calicoes, and apologised for the fact that they were not entertaining me at the Ritz; but I was truthfully able to answer that this, my first meal

beyond the bounds of civilisation, was infinitely more enticing than the formal dinner of a City hotel.

When the meal was finished we took our ease again on the verandah to the accompaniment of a gramophone—always an execrable instrument, in my opinion, but an enormous boon to these exiles from all the ordinary comforts of life. Naturally, I was now all agog to know something of my hosts' method of life, and particularly of how they filled their leisure. They told me that the most trying time is the evening, which is left practically without diversion, since the short days preclude sports. But on Saturday nights there is a kinema show where are presented films that are old, cracked, and flickering, and must have been round the world for ten years before they reached Papua. And of course there is the local hostel; but this, I gather, is not run on the strictest Y.M.C.A. lines.

Occasionally an effort is made at collective amusement: canoe races are organised, or amateur theatricals, or a cricket match, or dances on the broad verandahs. But these are infrequent and count for little compared with the long hours of idleness that confront the hobbyless man, who is reduced to smoking interminable cigarettes and reading the *Sydney Bulletin* until he knows it by heart. One can imagine that the advent of the cross-word puzzle has been a boon in Papua.

By the foregoing it can be deduced that since it is sundown at 6 p.m. and dark at 6.10 p.m., that killing time in a country where time is not, is a matter difficult of accomplishment.

IV

As I sat on the verandah of the Mess in the evening I heard a distant sound of drums, and when I was told that this came from Hanuabada and announced the celebration of a native festival, I set out by the light of the moon, fired with a desire to see the savage in his own home.

The track was utterly deserted. No sound could be heard save that of my own feet crunching upon the gravel. The hills on my right cast black shadows across the road, which, where it dipped, lay in total darkness. But after I had gone some way, strange shapes loomed up out of the darkness ahead and materialised into native revellers *en route* for the scene of the festivities. Accustomed as I was to the clatter of leather footwear upon hard paving, the sound of their bare feet sounded strange to me, and after they had drawn aside to let me pass, I heard low mutterings which led me to wonder if I should be attacked. The lights of Port Moresby were twinkling across the water only two miles away, but nevertheless I felt completely cut off and alone in a mystery of things utterly strange to me, particularly when at last the black silhouettes of native huts loomed up against the sky, the unshorn timber of the piles upon which they were built making a confused pattern against the deep purple of the water beneath them. Here, too, however, was the same sense of mystery in the dark. Here and there the sickly yellow light from trade lamps stabbed the darkness, revealing strange shapes grotesquely distorted by the feeble rays. On my right were coco-nut palms, the bases of their long slender trunks lost in the deeper shadows of the uneven ground. And among these shadows were yet darker patches which proved upon inspection to be groups of natives.

The noise of the drums increased, and as I reached the crowd of natives the babel of tongues became deafening. Strange, dark faces, forbidding in their but dimly revealed features, peered into my face and then melted away. It was a world of moving shadows: of things unreal and ill-defined. The air was heavy with the overpowering aroma of coco-nut and sweet-scented flowers.

I came to the piece of ground set aside for the dance, and I was hemmed in by hordes of naked figures, until I considered the advisability of trying to force my way back

through the dense throng ; for I was unarmed except for a light malacca cane. However, there was no suggestion of belligerent action on the part of the natives, and I soon decided that the wonderful experience was worth any risk that might be associated with it.

It became apparent, too, that I was now regarded as of quite secondary interest, for the dance was about to begin.

The dancers were ranged in two lines facing each other, men and women alternately, with arms linked, each man having a long cylindrical drum. All were gorgeously beflowered and beplumed, their faces being painted and their bodies lavishly anointed with coco-nut oil. To the rhythm of the drums they moved slowly, three steps forward, three steps backward, intoning all the while a weird chant. Gradually the beat of the drums rose into a crescendo ; and as it rose, the chant became a wild shout. Then again the noise lulled and the alternate stepping recommenced, now with three steps to the right and three to the left, again to culminate in fury.

I could not, of course, understand the songs that they were singing ; but I have since been told that the words used on these occasions are, to say the least of it, more than *risqué*.

Meanwhile, around the dancing-ground, the beaux and the belles of the village were parading up and down in all their finery, the girls having festooned themselves with strings of beads and decorated their fuzzy hair with flowers and plumage. Matrons, surrounded by little groups of piccaninnies, squatted on the ground or sat on the stumps of palm-trees, chewing betel, smoking, chattering, and noisily exchanging badinage. A little apart, some of the younger generation were emulating the performance of their elders with old kerosene tins in place of the drums ; while others, ignoring it altogether and playing hide-and-seek in the darkness, had the appearance of shadows chasing shadows.

Seen by the dim light of the moon which filtered through the interstices of the palm-leaves, it was a strange scene, enchanting, barbaric and eerie. I found it difficult to realise that it was "the real thing"; I was continually expecting the curtain to be rung down and the mummers to clean themselves of their paint. Yet real it most certainly was, and when I convinced myself of that, it was the world of motors and trams and broadcasting that seemed "unreal."

V

On the following morning I was still fascinated with what I had witnessed, and, eager for more, I set out to see the same village by daylight.

On the road, I was amazed at Nature's colour schemes, which seemed almost futuristic in their crudity. In the shadow, the telegraph-posts looked a hideous violet and the white walls of houses almost puce, while shadows cast on walls that faced the sun were of a light cobalt blue. So startling and extravagant were these effects that I thought at first that the sides of posts and houses had been painted in these crude colours; then I wondered if my sight could be at fault. But there was no doubt about it; as I have said, Nature riots in colours here, contradicting many of the laws which art accepts in other countries.

At the entrance to the village I found what is known as a *dubu*—a platform supported by four posts, ornately decorated with carvings of snakes, crocodiles and birds and surmounted with carvings of crabs' claws. On this platform the elders of the village meet for council, and here those tribal customs are held which still continue.

For even here, as I was soon to discover, the teachings of the white man have mixed with the survival of the primitive. The shore was edged with coco-nut palms, and beyond these, built in a long line over the water, straggled the village. But everywhere were signs of the encroachment of civili-

sation. Some of the huts, I could now see, were built bungalow-fashion, with roofs of corrugated iron ; at intervals along the beach stood iron water-tanks fitted with brass taps ; upon the ridge of some slightly elevated ground which ran down to the shore was built an unpretentious mission hut, of wood with an iron roof, looking for all the world like the meeting-place of a small sect in a London suburb. And although here and there I saw villagers dressed in the apparel of Nature, others wore ragged and filthy remnants of European clothing, children were dressed in dirty calicoes, and the fearsome warriors who had instilled me with fear the night before were now transformed into mild vendors of native skirts and model canoes.

I must admit that the first effect of this metamorphosis was to give me the idea that in some respects at least the status of the native had been lowered instead of raised by contact with the white man ; and later events proved that this idea was not entirely without foundation. The influence of the white man has now been present for fifty years, and the result is a quasi-civilisation, without the advantage of modern drainage systems, etc., but equally without the splendour of savagery.

Nevertheless, even in Hanuabada, it is still possible to get glimpses, as I had done the previous night, of the primitive life. For example, sorceresses still exist in the village ; but they are " foreigners," hailing from the area of Suau-Tawala.

After I had explored the village, I sat down to make some studies. I was immediately surrounded by hordes of inquisitive spectators, and since the prestige of the white man is not rigorously enforced in Port Moresby and its neighbourhood, I experienced some difficulty in dispersing the crowd. The inhabitants of these two villages are regarded throughout the territory as the worst-behaved natives in New Guinea. Of the truth of this I am hardly in a position to form an opinion, but I must say, at the least, that I found one striking example to the contrary. A boy

came to sell me some inviting-looking bananas. Tobacco is the recognised medium of exchange, and I took out a nearly empty pouch and emptied its contents into the boy's hands. When he saw that it was all that I possessed, he gave it back to me, but left the bananas by my side, with the words: "No, Taubada (white man), more better 'e stop." So, in appreciation of his courtesy, I gave him a cigarette; and that he shared with two companions.

To the native boy, Port Moresby is Mecca, for here as cook-boy he will receive a stipend of forty-eight pounds per annum, which to him is a fortune. In fact, he is overpaid, and the result is to give him an exaggerated idea of his own importance and to make him impertinent. If the reputation of the people of this district is deserved, this, no doubt, is in part the cause.

But I had come to Hanuabada to paint rather than to study native morals, and I shut my eyes to everything except the sights of interest in the village. And these were plenty.

Many of the piccaninnies were occupied in making toy canoes from scraps of wood, with leaves for sails: quaint little craft which sailed with considerable speed. I gave one of the little shipwrights a shining sixpence for a specimen of his work, and greatly amazed him; for, as I afterwards discovered, I in my turn was lavishly overpaying him, since for this sum I could have bought the entire fleet. And for my own sake it was a pity that I had so exhibited my inexperience. The fame of my wealth and generosity spread through the village, and soon I was inundated by a sea of little brown figures, each clasping in a little brown hand one or more of the tiny models, to be offered to me at the same price. And when at last I left the village I was followed for a considerable distance by a procession of disappointed salesmen.

The elder children make models of the lakatoi and get their first smattering of seamanship from races with their

PLATE 2.—HANUABADA, PORT MORESBY.

To face p. 30.

ingenious craft. Lakatoi canoes form a very important factor in the tribal life of the district. In them the villagers make protracted expeditions every year to the Western Division of Papua, to barter their earthenware pots for the local crops of sago and for canoes. With the South-East Trades they set out, to return with the North-West Monsoons. Frequently, two or more of the lakatoi are lashed together to make a large raft with multiple sails, capable of carrying a considerable cargo.

There is great excitement in the villages when the trading fleet sets out on its hazardous enterprise, for the mariners are about to make a difficult voyage lasting many moons ; they are bound for an almost unknown world, knowing that they will encounter hostile tribes, storms, and possibly shipwreck. But it is on them that the prosperity of the villages will depend, since commerce is just as important to the Papuan natives as it is to more civilised communities.

When the fleet is due to return, excitement runs high in the villages, and speculation is rife as to its fate. The expedition may have failed, commercially : there may have been but little demand for pots, in which case the mariners will bring back little wealth to their friends ; or more acute disasters may have been met. On the other hand, the results may have exceeded the hopes of even the most optimistic. Upon one occasion a returning fleet was overtaken by a fast launch containing the Inspector of Plantations, who drew alongside to answer inquiries for news. His launch would reach the village long before the more slowly moving fleet, and he was inundated with messages for anxious relatives. The voyage, in this case, had been entirely successful : all the earthenware was disposed of and in its place was a large cargo of sago and new canoes. To one home was sent a message of sadness, for a member of the expedition had been carried off by a crocodile, but otherwise all were safe and well.

CHAPTER TWO

MISSIONARIES AND MINERS

I

In due course our steamer left Port Moresby and sailed westwards for sixty-four miles to Yule Island, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Mission of the Sacred Heart. As we rounded the head of the island, some surpassingly beautiful scenery came into view: creeks of the deepest azure stretching for miles, enclosed by high mountain ranges; the rich verdure of the island, moist from recent rains, scintillating in the sunlight; the sea unruffled except for the slight ripples made by the ship as she moved slowly to her anchorage. It was a peaceful scene, and but for the presence of coco-nut palms it might have been taken for a piece of English landscape.

A whaleboat shot out from the shore, bringing the R.M. of the island, resplendent in white ducks and helmet. He brought the mails, and that was the official object of his visit; but he spent longer in the captain's cabin than that business demanded. Mail-ships are not frequent at Yule Island, since it is not a regular port of call, and when you have not received a mail for months and your last bottle of whisky is a matter of ancient history, you are easily persuaded into staying to make the acquaintance of a third party—with a cork in it.

Meanwhile the missionaries among our passengers were collecting their baggage preparatory to going ashore. They were to resume their duties on the island; but

doubtless they would be leaving the ship for a time in any case. For punts heavily laden with bags of copra were already in sight. Technically, copra is the dried meat of the coco-nut, and it is used extensively in the manufacture of soap. But it is known in these parts principally by its odour, which is not dissimilar to that of rancid butter in the last stages of dissolution, with an effective range of some six miles. At six yards it is more than intolerable, and anyone with a nose would leave the ship as soon as a cargo of copra approached—a measure which, although desirable, is rarely possible.

So I took my place with all haste in the missionaries' launch and went ashore on a voyage of exploration. Yule Island is definitely a missionary centre, and this fact is reflected in the costume of the inhabitants. I saw only one woman dressed *à la* Papua, the others being attired in the hideous and usually begrimed smock common to nearly all native women who belong to missions. For some reason or other the mental horizon of the average missionary seems to be bounded by the idea of clothing the savage. But fortunately the missionaries of Yule Island are men of culture who handle the education of the native with a broad-minded vision. They have discovered that a native who has grown up in the ways of Nature usually contracts disease if suddenly made to wear clothes, and consequently the natives are allowed to attend Mass in the full glory of their adornments and decorations, beaded and feathered, beflowered and beplumed: the disfiguring smocks are reserved for those who have been brought up in the mission from infancy. The natives are taught "the three R's," but in particular they receive instruction in the useful crafts such as carpentry. They are also taught to sing. I was told that in the mountain district of Mafulu, some sixty miles from Yule, there is a native choir whose rendering of the psalmody has been declared to be equal to that of any choir in Europe. And this is credible, for the singers

have a natural aptitude for this class of music ; indeed, I was myself struck by the close resemblance between the Papuan songs and the chanting of a litany.

I noticed that the women of this place tied up their hair in a bunch high at the back of the head, fastening it with long wooden combs—a method that produces an effect utterly different from the usual fuzzy mops of the Papuans. Whether or not this also was the effect of missionary influence I could not ascertain.

One other local practice struck me forcibly. It is the fashion for the men of Yule Island to cultivate narrow waists, and so great is the importance attached to this that the men will wear tight belts of bark to reduce their girth at this one particular spot. The effect is ludicrous ; but the origin of the fashion is serious and, I would say, highly sensible. It is all a question of matrimony. If a man looks corpulent, the maids will have none of him : for corpulence implies indolence, and what, they say, is the use of a husband that won't work ? Men are in the majority on Yule Island, and the competition to secure a wife is keen ; consequently the " slim line " is all the rage. Even men who are cursed with really excessive corporations do their best to hide the fact, pulling their belts tight until these are hidden by great rolls of overhanging flesh. It is a pathetic sight !

II

After leaving Yule Island we turned in our tracks and went back, past Port Moresby, to stop at Bootless Inlet, a mining district fourteen miles west of the port. Hitherto our entrance into an anchorage had been the occasion for a beautiful view. But there is nothing beautiful about Bootless Inlet. It has a background of bleak, grey mountains, like grim sentinels guarding the sinister secrets of the hinterland, and a confused foreground of smaller, cone-

shaped hills surmounted by bungalows. A light railway, running between banks of tall grass, connects the mines with the pier, and beside the track lie the debris of mining plant, rusting engine parts, old boilers, tangled and twisted hoops of old iron. There was not a redeeming feature in the whole of the unlovely spot—except for the shareholders, who, I understand, receive handsome dividends from these copper mines.

To some people, Bootless Inlet may not appear as depressing as it did to me. But I must confess that I saw it as the side entrance to Hades, particularly at night, when the flare from the railway engine lit up the rugged landscape, sulphurous smoke belched from the funnel, and swarms of black devils leapt out of the uncanny shadows. I almost expected to see the cloven hoof and spiked tails which, we are told, are the uniform of his Satanic Majesty's adherents.

CHAPTER THREE

SAMARAI

I

AFTER LEAVING BOOTLESS INLET we steamed eastward along the coast for more than two hundred and fifty miles. Extinct volcanoes, steep and sheer, thrust their jagged heads into the clouds, while snow-white surf surged over fringing reefs or broke against the shore. Then all was swallowed in the sudden tropic night, until at last came dawn, all heliotrope and pink, the rising sun pouring streams of gold down the mountains to gild the clusters of sleepy little islands among which Samarai lay dreaming in a sea of purest topaz.

Beautiful little Samarai is a jewel set in the South Pacific Ocean. It is so small that the palm-girt walk which encircles it can be traversed in twenty minutes; but it is the only spot in all Papua, besides Port Moresby, that can be called a town. The scenes in its streets are very much the same as those at Port Moresby: there are the Government buildings, two verandahed hotels (known locally as the "top pub" and the "bottom pub"), and a harbour alive with decrepit schooners, launches and canoes. There are the same brilliant hues in its streets, more brilliant now, however, because of the excitement which brings everyone into the open because our ship has brought the mails. In Samarai live a hundred and fifty white people in snug bungalows on the hillside, or a few yards off the neat, sandy roads; and natives of every type from all over

PLATE 3.—A LITTLE TROBRIANDER.
My unexpected entrance into a strange village causes fear and surprise.

To face p. 36.

the territory, Motuans from the central division with enormous haloes of frizzy hair, Dobuans, natives from the adjacent islands of Sariba and Rogeia, and many others.

The island contains but fifty acres, and half of this space is occupied by a single steep hill. From the top of this slope the view is indescribably beautiful. Blue water, sprinkled with palm-clustered islets, stretches for miles and is enclosed by wild mountains clothed with thick forest and tropical foliage. To the north lie the China Straits—the fastest tide-race in the world—backed by the dim outlines of Normanby Islands in the far distance. In the foreground is a mosaic of reds, purples, emerald and turquoise where the placid waters caress the fringing reefs of the island, while nearer still, at the base of the abruptly sloping hill, is the settlement of Samarai itself : toy houses spread out in a fairyland of palms. Upon every hand it is a scene of tranquil beauty and serene peacefulness.

On the face of this landscape there is but one disfiguring scar : a row of iron buildings of dull red at the base of one of the abrupt declivities of the hill. These are the native hospital and the jail.

To be in jail carries no stigma to the Papuan. He is there because he has infringed the strange tribal customs of the white man, whose words must be obeyed. Prison, moreover, carries with it the benefit of regular meals and comfortable quarters ; and, indeed, reformatory would be a more apt term than jail. No grim walls and hard paving are here : coco-nut palms, a hedge of crotons and the scarlet hibiscus, limpid waters gently purling along the shelving beach—these are the prison walls of Samarai jail. Games of cricket and football are provided, and when the day is done and cool dusk supplants the glare there is the thrilling music of drums and the soft cadences of folk-songs in the evening air.

Nevertheless, the Papuan does not like prison, for it

means uncongenial and monotonous work, the *bête noire* of these independent people, and—worst of all—separation from his relatives. With the Papuan, his home life, his gardens, mean everything, for he is born to roam the wild jungle.

Some of the prisoners are natives of the two adjacent islands of Sariba and Rogeia, where, prior to the advent of the white man, head-hunting and cannibalism were extensively practised. The warriors would set out in their large war-canoes, pounce upon slumbering villages, and destroy man, woman and child, the bodies forming the *pièce de résistance* for many a wild feast. But now these people are almost effete : their villages are considered to be the most picturesque in the South-Eastern Division of Papua, their houses being very ornate and surrounded by gardens with pebble-bordered paths prettily decorated with shells and flowers. There is little to remind one that they were once the homes of bloodthirsty cannibals.

Perhaps the chief survival of the wildness of these islanders lies in their looseness in questions of morality. Throughout the whole of this country free-love is a normal condition, but whereas other tribes exhibit a certain reserve on the subject, the people of these islands make no effort to hide their amours. On the other hand, the position of the women, perhaps in part because of their proficiency in magic, is here very high : they are independent, and on the whole are exceptionally well treated, while many of them hold high positions in tribal affairs.

The relations of the sexes vary very considerably among the different islands. In most parts of Papua marriage is mainly the result of a natural affection between man and woman, sealed with an exchange of gifts between the contracting parties : in which case infidelity upon either side will meet with quick retribution. And in Sariba and Rogeia, even, marriage is regarded as the natural conclusion to a prolonged liaison. But at Rossel Island, some two

hundred miles east of Samarai, the islanders purchase their wives, and impecunious bachelors, unable to afford a wife, club together for a share in the favours of a concubine. Wealthy men can here have harems, maintaining one wife and sharing also in a number of concubines. These hired women are not regarded as worthy of contempt, as would be the case in other tribes, but, on the contrary, are treated rather better, if anything, than the legalised wives.

II

We sophisticated white people are rather predisposed to imagine that a native custom must of necessity be something peculiar and illogical; but actually is not this the natural attitude towards all alien things, in degree according to the amount of our understanding of them? And is there not much the same feeling on the part of the natives towards the habits and customs of the white man? The Papuan, for example, has had an entirely strange set of manners, laws and ideals thrust upon him, and he finds them hard to understand. Even a new language has been given him, and naturally he finds it bewildering. He cannot master it. He can only manage a sort of rendering of English terms in the fashion of his own speech. But this, which we call pidgin-English, he speaks fluently enough, and its use is now universal throughout the Western Pacific; in fact, it is becoming the common language between tribes that would not otherwise understand each other, and a patrol officer who penetrated into the unexplored countries of the mandated territory assured me that there it is spoken by natives who have never seen a white man.

This pidgin-English is certainly very quaint. If you ask a native to bring you a corkscrew, he will gaze and grin at you in amazement; but tell him to "get him tin-opener belong a bottle," and all is well. In this droll language, to

be intoxicated is to be "sick belong bottle"; an envelope is "hat belong paper"; blotting paper is "blanket belong paper"; a chicken is "lik lik"; and so on. Meat is "bullermercow," presumably because when the first bull and cow were brought into the country they were introduced as "bull and a cow"; and a sausage is "banana belong bullermercow"! A native suffering from stomach-ache will remark that "it fight altogether too much," which is certainly expressive; a hair-cut is "cut 'im grass belong 'im"; while the proper way to tell a porter that he is slacking is to say "fight 'im strong fellow too much."

The marvels of the white man's inventive genius do not startle the Papuan; in fact, although he may be mildly curious he scarcely ever displays surprise. If you ask him what he thinks of the wonders of wireless, or of motors, he will merely remark: "Oh, fashion belong Dim Dim." These are matters beyond his understanding, and as they do not appeal to his superstitious imagination, they do not greatly interest him. It is through that that he would be more keenly attracted. In fact, I am convinced that if he was told that these inventions, instead of being the productions of mere mortals like himself, were the work of witch-doctors and sorcerers, he would hold them in fear and awe. And this, I think, is where the missionaries obtain such a strong hold upon the native: their dogmas appeal to his imagination and to his strong sense of the supernatural.

III

I was told many stories of happenings on these islands, some of them so astonishing that I could not resist the conclusion that they were a part of the special diet regularly offered to strangers: in other words, that I was having my leg pulled. But fortunately I was in a position to apply certain principles of criticism to what I was told, and eventually I was able to sort out truth from romance.

And some of the true tales that I was told seem worth preserving.

At Kiwai Island, in the Gulf of Papua, a huge crocodile seized a native woman on the beach and carried her out into deep water. Her screams aroused the villagers, who grasped their weapons and frantically gave chase along the shore and in their canoes. The crocodile took alarm and, with the woman still held in its jaws, dived into the muddy depths of the river. It did not reappear, and the natives eventually abandoned the search and returned mourning to their homes. Some two miles farther down the stream a white man, out game-shooting, came out of the jungle and found himself face to face with an enormous crocodile, with an apparently dead woman on the ground beside it. He backed into the bush, let fly with both barrels into the beast's open mouth, and then as it collapsed went forward to examine the corpse. To his astonishment he found the woman still alive. He despatched one of his boys to the village, and in due course the woman was carried home. She recovered, and is alive to this day!

Another startling story is told in the Mambari district. Shortly before daybreak the inhabitants of a village were aroused by a terrific noise. They rushed out to see what was happening, and found an enormous python—twenty feet long is no unusual size in this country—at death-grips with a crocodile. For yards around, the beach was a shambles of uprooted trees and flying sand. One of the natives afterwards gave a friend of mine a harrowing description of the fight. My friend asked who was the victor. "Snake 'e 'old 'im crocodile altogether too tight," was the answer. "Then the snake won?" suggested my friend. "No," was the answer, "'im altogether too much dead." "Then," said my friend, "you mean that the crocodile won?" "No, Taubada," said the boy, "crocodile 'im altogether too much dead."

IV

The hotel in which I stayed in Samarai was a light and airy, one-storeyed structure, flanked upon two sides by broad verandahs, which gave it a pleasant effect of spaciousness. The upper storey, fronting the street, was divided with match-boarding into small oblong rooms. In the rear of these ran a second row of rooms, opening on to a verandah that covered almost half the floor-space of the upper storey. In its way, this verandah was very handsome. It had stained flooring, rattan cane chairs, *chaises longues*, occasional tables of wickerwork, and one large deal table painted black and carrying in its centre a bowl of flowers whose brilliant colours were reflected in its shining surface. Flowers in pots were everywhere, making it a cheerful scene. At the far end of the verandah the vertical uprights supporting the sloping iron roof made a frame for a picture, showing a palm-clustered hill and white bungalows with red roofs, while, through the interstices of the palm, appeared patches of the purple and blue of distant mountains.

There were two dining-rooms in the hotel, one fronting the street and one at the rear, with French windows connecting them. If you desired to be considered as one of the best people, you dined in the front room and enjoyed the privilege of punkahs ; if not, you went to the back room and enjoyed the still greater privilege of dining in your shirt-sleeves.

All things considered, the hotel would have been comfortable enough if it had not been that I was unfortunate in my next-door neighbour. He appeared to have found life in the town somewhat exhilarating : with the result that he experienced difficulty in getting into bed and still greater difficulty in remaining there. The partition between us was thin, and although, to my relief, it resisted his apparent efforts to break into my room, sleep for me proved out of the question.

One expects, of course, in this part of the world, to meet the type of man who is euphemistically referred to as "a rough diamond." But one rarely does so. On the contrary, the men who are "down and out" are usually the fine old characters who were pioneers in the country many years before. The beachcomber is now a mythical figure, but there are still old men living in the loneliness of the jungle who come to the townships occasionally to purchase stores. And there are others, whom adverse circumstances have forced from their quest—the stores can no longer finance them: they hang about the verandahs of the hotels or pace listlessly up and down the jetties. They are now old and broken, but they are veterans of better days, never admitting defeat, and still ready, given but the chance, to renew their old endeavours and adventures in the search for gold. Many and varied were the tales they narrated: stories of adventure told in the simple language of the untutored; thrilling stories of shipwreck and grim struggles with the forces of Nature, of sudden encounter with hostile tribes; of buccaneers and gold and pearls, and the booming days in the mining camps, hard times mixed with interludes of wild orgies when champagne flowed as freely as the gold which bought it. These times are long since past; the melodrama of yesterday has been supplanted by the Gilbertian atmosphere of to-day.

The residents of Samarai are a small community, confined within a restricted area. If you have a feud with your neighbour, an intrigue, or an *affaire* which does not prosper, you cannot put its results away from you: your indiscretions become public property and gather colour in the process. And this lack of privacy can be embarrassing. It is sometimes particularly so for the R.M., who is frequently compelled to haul his own friends into court and fine them, although he may possibly be dining with them the same evening! On one occasion the R.M. inflicted a fine of fifteen pounds on his particular friend. When

sentence was passed the two men went to celebrate the occasion with a drink ; but the R.M. had to place a sentry at the ship to ensure that the delinquent could not depart until the fine was paid.

V

Life in Samarai is not without its recreations. The white population disports itself in much the same manner all over the world: with dances, tennis tournaments, cricket matches, soirées, and so on. And in Samarai there is the added festivity that when the atmosphere becomes unduly bacchanalian, spirits can be cooled by an impromptu launch-trip round the island.

For the natives, the chief weekly excitement is "movie night." Then the nine o'clock tattoo on the drum, which warns all cook-boys and other servants to return to their quarters, is postponed for an hour. It is a great occasion. Frizzy mops are teased out with wooden combs, bodies are re-anointed with coco-nut oil, and treasured gee-gaws are brought out and worn with pride. Long before the doors are opened a crowd assembles on the promenade, and the old, old game of wooing—not, this time, a fair maid, but a dusky one—is played with all its accompaniments of swagger on the one side and of coyness, real or pretended, on the other.

The show is held in the one and only hall available for such functions. In the rear are a few rows of chairs for the use of Europeans, but the main part of the hall is without seats, for the Papuan does not like to be confined within artificial restrictions. Punctuality is unknown in this country, but at last the doors swing open and immediately the hall is crowded with its strange audience. There is one striking difference between it and an English audience: for whereas in our country the ladies seem to wear less in the evening than in the daytime, these dusky maidens

reverse the process and cover their shoulders, which are customarily bare, with gorgeous calicoes.

It is a vivacious scene. Every humorous incident of the films is greeted with cat-calls, whistling and uproarious laughter. The natives love it. They have no question as to the doubtful advantage of this product of civilisation, at any rate, and within limits they understood these pictures of a strange people in a strange land of which they knew nothing. There is a dumb Papuan at Port Moresby, who with the assistance of a few properties, with inimitable mimicry portrays the gestures and peculiar mannerisms of the entire cast in a film he has witnessed on the previous night, acting whole scenes.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTO THE HEART OF THE WILDS

IT WAS FROM SAMARAI that I was to set out for the Trobriand Islands. On the morning of my departure I suffered a rude awakening, for I was aroused from sleep by a lurid barrage of profanity coming from the corridor. The language was more " boldly imaginative " than anything I had ever heard : and I considered myself something of an authority on such matters. I listened in awe ; and gradually I realised that I was in some measure the cause of it. I had arranged that the skipper of the scow in which I was to travel should awake me at dawn. But it appeared that I had omitted to give him the number of my room, and he, being a man of resource, set about entering each room and lifting the mosquito net to see whether I was the occupant of the bed. He started, unfortunately, at the wrong end of the corridor, and by the time I came out to his rescue he had aroused such a turmoil that a hasty departure was the only route to safety.

The scow proved to be a decrepit vessel of about seven tons gross register. Her deck-space was negligible. Piled aft, in a jumbled mass amidst a confusion of rope, was a collection of much-dented and rusted kerosene tins containing our supply of fresh water, coco-nuts, rusty cooking utensils, bundles of sugar-cane, and a few pieces of timber which were to act as fuel for a rickety iron stove. Besides these things there were other stores, empty copra sacks and cases of trade tobacco, while bunches of green bananas were hanging from the frayed shrouds to ripen in the sun.

We steamed north-east, through the swirling torrent of the China Straits and out across the twenty-five miles of

open water to East Cape, the most eastern point of New Guinea. Upon the flat, palm-covered promontory of this cape, facing a seething channel that flows between the mainland and a small island, is a mission station, and here the courteous missionary offered me his hospitality for the night.

I was glad to spend the night ashore instead of in the limited accommodation of the boat, and I would willingly have lingered the next morning in the native village ; but a dangerous reef lay ahead of us, and the skipper was anxious to pass it before dark. So we set off again, and after a day that was rich with beautiful scenes we reached the calm water of Dawson Strait. We dropped anchor off Normanby Island, at the village of Gigipwala, an exquisite spot : a half-crescent of sandy beach, fringed with palms, where native huts nestled amongst the heavy foliage of the jungle, backed by a towering mountain. As soon as we hove-to, swarms of natives came out in canoes to barter coco-nuts, yams, fruit and fish for the ever-coveted tobacco ; but their methods of sale were orderly and very different from the often described scenes around a liner arriving in Eastern waters.

These people were Dobuans, unprepossessing in appearance, short, heavy featured, and with broad noses and large mouths. The younger members of the crew of our scow went ashore, and I could see that the native love-charms —the spines of palm-fronds with dried leaves fastened fanwise—were much in evidence. The older and more *blazé* sailors stayed behind and entertained their friends with the aid of a pack of cards, a jews' harp and a mouth-organ, and " tobac " supplied by the Taubada—myself.

Before dawn we were away again and well up the narrow, winding and almost land-locked strait. Sandy beaches and lagoons of wonderful colours came into view as we rounded the bends. Past swamps, plantations and villages we sailed, until we came to anchor again, this time off Salamo, Fergusson Island, where there is a very modern and prosperous-looking

mission. The missionary volunteered to assist our skipper in some repairs to the engine, and I went ashore to explore. On the jetty some members of our crew and natives of the village were seated in couples, one behind the other, each combing the other's hair with the long wooden comb carried by every Papuan. It was an absorbing process: and apparently a long one, for when I returned a few hours later it was still unfinished. The track to the village lay through dense jungle, the arched leaves of sago palms meeting overhead so as completely to shut out the sky. It was a long green tunnel of vine-tangled shrubs and palms, growing in wild profusion, which cast the path into gloom; while the stirring, but invisible, jungle life filled the hot air with its vibrant sounds.

I had foolishly come out in canvas shoes, and the spiked edges of dead palm-leaves cut my feet. Moreover, I had come without a weapon, and I could not forget that twenty-feet python were not infrequent in that district: to say nothing of wild boars and of poisonous insects. But as a matter of fact there was not much danger, since snakes were likely to be as much terrified of me as I would have been of them. On the way back, however, the boy whom I had hired as an escort pointed out a crocodile in the stream that bordered the track. And on the whole I was not sorry to leave such evil-looking territory.

The Dobuan villages are small hamlets of about a dozen houses scattered over a wide area. Dobu is said to be the stronghold of the flying witches, who eat the lungs and heart of their victims, snap their bones and drink their blood. Mariners are their especial prey, it appears, and they are much dreaded. Unfortunately, the Dobuan sorcerers are not particularly powerful in counteracting the attacks of the witches: they do not possess the power, claimed by their kindred in Motu and Mailu, of bringing dead people to life.

There was much that I would have liked to see in the

villages that we passed, rich as they were in legends and strange customs. We, however, touched at the village of Gumasila—one of the Amphlett group which is famous over a wide area for its beautiful pottery, of which they are the exclusive manufacturers. The Amphlettians are bold and competent sailors, but are regarded by other tribes as mean, inhospitable, arrogant and grasping people, and unfair in their business transactions. Nevertheless they have built up a large business, and are regarded as monopolists in this part of Papua. The crew evinced no desire to land, one of them remarking: "Suppose we go 'long shore, altogether woman they hide 'long bush, altogether man 'e make 'im too much spear belly belong me." Even more than the Dobuans, the women in this district are exceptionally virtuous—an unusual trait in a Papuan—and the community resent the intrusion of strangers in their villages. I wanted to land, but our skipper had made the voyage many times before, and for him it held no charm. He was merely anxious to get it finished and to return home. Perhaps he was wise. At any rate, I began to think so when we lost our course one night (through the steersman sleeping over the wheel) and found ourselves out of sight of land, but within the sound of breakers on the reefs. We hove-to for the night and kept a careful watch, but it was a relief when dawn broke and showed that in the night we had actually sailed past our destination.

The view was then utterly different from the impressive scenery that we had passed throughout the voyage. The grey sea lay as smooth as glass, mirroring on its surface the cloud billows that floated along the edge of the horizon. The distance was pencilled with strips of islands. It was my first view of the Trobriand Islands, and I must confess that I was disappointed. It was not until later that the fascination of these tropic islands held me enthralled with their splendour, their subtle beauty and their lavish colour schemes.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RESIDENT MAGISTRATE

I

AFTER ENTERING THE SHALLOWS of the main lagoon and sailing past a low-lying coast where the tangled matting of the jungle broke here and there over the beach, we anchored, and I went ashore to visit the house of a white trader. It was a depressing spot. Diseased palms hung their heads sadly over the dilapidated roof; and the approach to the house was scattered with refuse; pigs wallowed in the surrounding quagmire, and moulting poultry pecked at the rubbish. A flight of rickety steps led to the verandah, where unkempt natives squatted in the débris, spitting betel, the scarlet fluid splashing over walls and floor. I stepped cautiously across gaping holes and through a dark room, where I stumbled over remnants of furniture, old clothes and rusting iron, and so out on to the back verandah, where a native woman was toying with a parrot, as she reclined upon a filthy bed, covered with a mosquito-net that was yellow with age and dirt; a couple of soiled deck-chairs looked restful but uninviting, while flies and ants swarmed over putrifying bones that rested upon a begrimed meat-safe. My foot sent an empty bottle rolling as I walked towards the other occupant of the verandah, who was seated in a chair of considerable decrepitude, its ancient frame resting against the discoloured wall. He was clothed in slacks and a ragged singlet, his bare feet thrust into disreputable shoes; his tangled hair

straggled over his expressionless sunken eyes, and an unclean beard grew out of the caverns of his pallid cheeks. He rose unsteadily from his seat and put out a trembling hand towards me. He was not pretty to look at. The *ensemble* was, in fact, a disgusting sight: filth everywhere, and a general air of sordidness. But there was little doubt as to the reason of this. This trader had "gone native," living with a native wife and abandoning himself to a life that was a fearful mixture of the worst of civilisation with native manners outcast from their proper surroundings.

I was to finish my journey with a fifteen-mile run across the lagoon in a very diminutive launch. She was a strange little craft, of doubtful horse-power, and leaked like a sieve, the bottom boards floating in a welter of greasy water. As for the engine — well, Mr. W. Heath Robinson in even his wildest imaginings could not have conceived such a machine: the parts were held in position by pieces of wire, bits of string and cotton-waste. For the first few miles it spluttered and gasped, and the launch made its way across the calm water. Then, suddenly, with a roar the main casting split in halves. The two boys who constituted the crew gaped at it in astonishment and waited as if expecting it to mend itself and carry us onward. To make matters worse, great splashes of rain began to fall and lightning flickered across the sky. I felt almost as much at a loss as the boys, but something had to be done, and I told them to get out the paddles. The native workman is not unlike his English brother in some respects, and the excuse "Altogether too far, Taubada," had a familiar ring about it. But after I had addressed them in my best pidgin-English, interspersed with some expressions which they may possibly not have heard before, but of which I think they would have guessed the meaning, they bestirred themselves so far as to make some show with the paddles, and we began to move. After a short while we grounded on a sandbank. Again my vocabulary came into use, and

thus urged, the boys hopped over the side to get the old tub afloat, and we progressed a few yards farther, only to find ourselves aground once more. Again we pushed ourselves afloat and again we went aground.

It was now full night and intensely dark : canoes loomed up out of the warm mist and as quickly melted away, spirit figures on a ghostly sea. I was hungry, tired, and out of temper, but the crew seemed to regard the adventure as a huge joke and were inordinately amused at my discomforture. At last we found a deeper channel and moved ahead. We drew into the black shadows of the mangrove and a strange spectacle met my gaze : a native village apparently lit by incandescent gas ! But at closer range the light proved to come from millions of fireflies flitting between the trees : an extraordinary sight, which I should have regarded as incredible had I not actually witnessed it.

Then voices hailed us from the shore, and the gleam of hurricane lamps flickered between the palms. A *posse* of native police in uniform of dark blue serge, braided with scarlet, and a leather belt, came down the wharf, and I was escorted to the home of the R.M.

II

It was past midnight when I arrived, and my friend was in his pyjamas. We had not met for eight years, but our greetings were brief, for there was work to be done which preceded even the claims of hospitality. Time, as I have said, is of little consequence in this part of the world ; but there is one exception to the rule, and that is when the mail arrives. The launch which had brought me had also brought the mail, the first to reach these out-of-the-way islands for two or three months, and for the moment I was of quite secondary importance.

Long before our arrival the news had been carried from village to village that a Dim Dim boat was in sight, and the

few white men scattered over the islands had been put into eager anticipation of the arrival of their letters.

An interesting contrast, this scene, to the ordered activity of a G.P.O. in a great metropolis. The R.M. became for the nonce post-office sorter and the mail was divided, tied in canvas bags and despatched by the prisoners from the native jail, who departed upon their unenviable journey to the distant parts of the islands, and for these unfortunate messengers the night is filled with the terrors of the Bwaga'u (evil spirits) and the more dreaded flying witches who may jump across the tree-tops in a shower of sparks, casting their magic over the terrified postmen; but whatever their fears, they must obey orders, lest a more material punishment overtake them.

The R.M. is an all-important personage. He is a sultan, the supreme ruler of the islands, the representative of His Majesty the King of England, and as such has complete and unchallenged power. The white traders know that they must each have him on their side in any dispute. And the only occasional question of his authority comes from the missionaries, who sometimes appear to desire temporal as well as spiritual power over the natives.

But the R.M. fills many other offices besides that of ruler: he is also doctor, tax-collector, family solicitor, arbitrator and general factotum at the constant call of anyone who needs support of any kind. He is responsible for the health, welfare and general amity of the natives under his jurisdiction, and necessarily he must be a man of considerable discretion, tact and, above all, abounding patience.

The R.M.'s house did not harmonise with my preconception of it. It was certainly comfortable, but it did not suggest the romance of the wilds. It was a moderate-sized bungalow, constructed of wood with the customary iron roof, and surrounded by a spacious verandah. Around it lay twenty-five acres of ground, set out with lawns, well-ordered paths bordered with crotons, and avenues of coco-

nut palms. A neat embankment of gravel and dead coral ran along the waterside, terminating in a long jetty. On the land side, situated upon a gently rising slope, stood the police-boys' quarters, hospital huts, the large jail, and the prisoners' enclosure. All these buildings were built of native materials with thatched roofs of palm, so that they presented a very snug appearance. It was an imposing settlement; but it certainly failed to suggest one's conventional idea of life in the back-blocks.

III

The R.M., as I have said, is responsible for the health of his district, and he has to know the rudiments of medicine and even of surgery, and to be ready to do all the work of a doctor, from supplying a pill to performing an operation.

The hospital includes an operating theatre: a diminutive structure, perched on the customary piles. It is a crude building and decidedly unpicturesque. And the interior is even less attractive. On the left as you enter is a cupboard containing medicines and cases of surgical instruments. Upon a shelf which runs the full length of the far wall are some enamelware bowls, the only touch of finish in this rough interior; and in the corner is a primitive sink. The operating table is a heavy bench of plain deal set at a slightly inclined angle. Two sashed windows flooded with golden light this otherwise depressing room.

The R.M. invited me to come and see "some beautiful cases," and with much enthusiasm he paraded before me a number of his patients; but one glance at their revolting sores was enough for me, and I escaped into the fresh air and the sunshine. But later, when I considered myself duly hardened, I went to see him perform some minor operations; and I was struck with the extraordinary fortitude of the patients. In cases when no anæsthetics were used, the patients, even children, made scarcely

PLATE 4.—PAINTING IN KAVATARIA VILLAGE.

The two women in the long working skirts are both married; the one in the centre is my cook-boy's wife.

PLATE 5.—THE NATIVE JAIL, TROBRIAND ISLANDS.

To face p. 54.

a murmur as the knife cut into their flesh ; but in contrast to this I witnessed an astonishing exhibition of cowardice. When a trader was performing a simple operation upon an exceptionally strong and muscular man he clung to his wife, wept boisterously, and called upon his mother to come to his assistance.

Naturally, the witch-doctors deeply resent this intrusion into their domain. They still hold considerable influence and power over the community, partly by the threat of practising *puri-puri* or evil magic on those that disobey them. Consequently it is not an easy matter to persuade the natives to go to the Government for treatment. But in spite of the opposition, the rule has been established that all the people of the villages shall undergo a medical inspection at least once a year, and the R.M. has not only succeeded in curing a number of his subjects of their maladies, but has also reduced the average of cases of venereal disease to 2 per cent. of the population—a proportion in marked contrast to that existing amongst the civilised peoples of the world.

The R.M. has for medical assistant a Trobriander who has developed into a very efficient hospital orderly. In his own village this Trobriander is a man of rank and importance, and his influence is of great use in overcoming the native prejudice against the white man's "sorcery." In fact, the prejudice is gradually disappearing : in part because natives who have been successfully treated attain great faith in the white man's medicines and methods, and carry a good report to their friends. They suffer much from malaria, but they realise the undoubted value of the white man's quinine as a cure : indeed, they frequently apply for quinine when there is nothing the matter with them.

It must be remembered that the witch-doctors, apart from their more questionable practices, do heal the sick. I did not study their medical practice, but herbs, roots, leaves, heat and blood-letting appear to be important factors in their remedies. A native who is very sick will

invariably place a small fire under his bed and do everything he can to induce warmth. Toothache is relieved by the application of hot water; but in cases of severe agony the R.M. is asked to turn dentist and arrange an extraction.[1] Shaving of the head is frequently resorted to for head troubles. Upon one occasion the wife of Dobu, my cook-boy, complained that a small piece of coral had worked into the sole of her foot. Dobu heated a stone and placed it against the wound, then he substituted a cool leaf for the stone for a few minutes; he repeated the process of holding hot stones and cold leaves alternately against the foot for ten minutes, and then he scraped out the coral with the point of a knife and re-applied the hot stone for a few seconds to take off the inflammation—a singularly successful "amateur" operation.

The Trobrianders are remarkably susceptible to variations in the climate, and they suffer excessively from colds. It is curious how their methods in times of crisis approximate to those of the civilised nations. In the village of Olivileli, recently, an epidemic of influenza broke out and spread with alarming rapidity. The R.M. fought it with quinine and other medicines. Then the natives themselves decided that the right treatment was a change of air, and the entire population left the village and migrated to the coast, where they remained until the sea air had effected a cure!

Ulcers on the limbs and skin diseases are fairly common, particularly the scaly ringworm (supoma). This disease spreads over the whole body, causing the skin to flake off, though it does not appear to cause any pain, though in certain stages of this complaint extreme irritation is experienced.

There are occasional epidemics of dysentery. It is said that hundreds died during one attack in 1909, two villages

[1] One native appeared to take the R.M.'s enthusiasm for his work to heart, to such an extent that after the tooth had been extracted he suggested that the R.M. should make payment to him for having allowed the operation to be performed!

being decimated. And in October 1924 a serious outbreak amongst the children was only checked by vigorous action on the part of the R.M.

These people are a hardy race. I have seen natives after a brawl with the most terrible gashes which would have incapacitated a European for months ; but the natives would be ready for another affray the next night, or at any rate within a few days. Their wounds seldom become septic, although the reverse is the case with Europeans in this climate. I suffered severely from what are locally known as " New Guinea sores," caused by infinitesimal scratches : it was four months before they were healed, and the marks of some of them still remain.

Abnormalities are not common. I know of only two cases : one a man with six fingers on one hand, and the other a hunchback. There was one case of leprosy in the hospital. Idiocy and lunacy are very uncommon. I know of only two cases in the Trobriands : one is a woman whose mania is to festoon herself with sea-shells until the weight of them becomes too much, when she throws them away and commences a fresh collection. The other case is an old man, quite harmless ; he wanders aimlessly about the island. Sometimes, with many dramatic gestures, he gives orations—fluent verbiage, about nothing in particular ; upon other occasions he remains seated for hours, gazing vacantly into space.

The Trobrianders are physically a fine race, although there appears to be more than one type amongst them. Some are tall and of commanding personality and refined features, with high and broad foreheads, well-shaped noses and chins, and intelligent expressions ; while others are short, with negroid faces, coarse features, thick-lipped mouths and narrow foreheads. Their colour, too, varies from the shade of light coffee to that of deep mahogany.

Temperamentally they are a vivacious, excitable people. But of late years the influence of the Government and of

the missions has considerably toned down their spirits. They retain an innate sense of humour, but the old wild days, when they could follow their impulses unrestrained by anything except the tribal laws and conventions, are gone. Even on them civilisation is beginning to set its mark.

IV

Despite his other multifarious duties, the R.M. is not allowed to forget that he is essentially a magistrate. He holds court regularly, in his unpretentious office, a small room adjoining the dining-room. I attended the court occasionally, in search of local colour and the eternal interest which is always to be found in a court of law. The R.M. would sit at the table, with a police-boy at attention at his side. The first case might be one under the divorce laws : fully two-thirds of the cases are concerned with the eternal triangle. The defendant, a woman, stands with her hands behind her back, her shells and beads jangling as she bends forward to answer the magistrate's questions. Witnesses are called, but cross-examination is a difficult matter. The Papuan is evasive and subtle in his evidence, and will frequently launch out into a diatribe against his relatives, or an account of the affairs of his gardens, without any pretence that they are relevant to the case. He will be afraid, too, of offending the R.M., and will be nervous and ill at ease.

Then will come the summing-up, a complicated matter, since cases concerning domestic matters must not be judged according to European standards, but in the light of the tribal customs and laws. Yet these laws do not regulate the sentence.[1] By native custom a male co-respondent would probably be killed, a special sword being kept for the purpose ; but the R.M. merely passes sentence of three

[1] If the man was caught *in flagrante delicto*, immediate death was the penalty.

weeks' imprisonment. The prisoner is handed over to a police-boy, who cuts off all his arm and leg bands, divests him of his finery, and passes him on to the jail warder, who sets him to whatever labour may be occupying the prisoners.

The Government prohibits the natives from taking the law into their own hands, just as our Government prohibits us from righting our own wrongs : but the swords referred to above still exist. And there are other and more subtle methods. I was told that if a husband wished to rid himself of an unfaithful wife he would procure a *puri-puri* from one of the sorcerers and smear the skin of the lady as she lay asleep. Then when she bathed in the lagoon the crocodiles would come. . . .

The decision of the R.M. is not regarded in all cases as settling the matter. After all, a man may steal one's wife and be sent to prison : that may satisfy the white man's law, but it is insufficient as revenge, and poison is so much more satisfactory. Or if the offender comes from another village the victimised husband may call on his friends and neighbours to carry out a raid, which will result in a lasting vendetta between the two villages.

In less serious matters a dispute is sometimes settled in a curious manner. The friends of each party would put down a pile of yams and taitu, rather after the manner of " paying money into court " ; and whichever party put down the biggest pile would be adjudged victors in the suit and the disputants return to their villages with their produce.

In cases of theft a curious point prevails in native law : if a thief is caught in the act, he is not considered guilty unless he is actually touched by whoever sees him—the mere witnessing of the act is not regarded as sufficient. Under tribal laws the punishment for theft by a man was death, for pilfering by a man, loss of the lobe of an ear ; but the punishment of a woman was flogging, followed by

being tied to a tree that all the village might know of her guilt.

By the white man's law, capital punishment is rarely inflicted, even when the victim is a white man. It is recognised that the attitude of the Papuan towards murder is not ours. He is still a savage, and in many instances he is merely carrying out a matter of ritual handed down to him through the ages by tradition. To have killed one's man is rather a matter of pride, and there are privileges only accorded to those who have accomplished the feat.[1] If the owner of a house has killed a man, for example, he is entitled to paint the posts of his home with a red paint made with a mixture of coco-nut oil and clay, and this is a distinction much sought after. At Port Moresby, some years ago, a prominent native built himself a house and then looked anxiously around for someone to kill in order that he might complete the scheme of decoration. He called upon his friends to assist him in the matter—a little courtesy which, in Papuan etiquette, it would have been impolite to refuse. He gave a party, inviting his friends to come and "roast some sago." The elder men knew well enough that this phrase was a euphemism, and they carefully brought their clubs with them. But one of the younger men did not understand the purport of the message: he arrived unarmed, and was advised to go back for a weapon. Unfortunately for himself, he did so. He fetched his club, and in the ensuing celebration he used it to such purpose upon the head of a white man that he eventually found himself sentenced to a considerable period of imprisonment.

Cannibalism, too, is largely a ritualistic custom, the theory being that the cannibal will absorb the strength and courage of the person that he is eating. The Government has had a hard fight to stamp out this custom. It was practised, not by individuals only, but by whole populations, and drastic punishment was therefore out of the question:

[1] Not a Trobriand custom.

the death penalty could not be inflicted upon an entire village. But the missionaries played their part, and in due course the Government adopted a similar procedure. Instead of threatening punishment, they explained the superiority of the white man's customs. They persuaded the native chiefs that cannibalism was an inferior habit; in fact, that in the best circles the eating of human flesh "was not done," and that if the chiefs desired to be considered "class" they would substitute pig flesh in place of human flesh. And in some districts the argument prevailed.

V

Apart from the cases of matrimonial dispute before the court, the most frequent matter of default was non-payment of taxes. Not unnaturally, the Trobriander has a great objection to being taxed, and he will avoid payment if he can. Some ask that their work shall be paid for in terms of tobacco instead of in money: for, as one of them said to me: "Suppose I get 'im money, Government or Mission 'e take it; suppose you give me 'tobac,' I smoke 'im all same. Government 'e no can take."

Passive resistance is quite common, many of the natives preferring two months in jail to parting with any of their worldly goods: although as a matter of fact their friends and relatives usually bail them out before the sentence is completed.

Nevertheless, there exists another point of view on this subject of taxation. Taxation only applies to men during the ages of manhood: from sixteen to thirty-six. Consequently his first payment of tax is to a young native an occasion of pride: it makes his position as a grown man in the eyes of the village, and establishes him as a source of interest to the ladies—an interest which, it must be admitted, will be increased if he is later able to show his cleverness by avoiding payment. The position seems to be that it

is an honour to receive the tax demand-note, but a still greater honour not to succumb to it! Youths on the verge of sixteen will sometimes try to cultivate beards in order to achieve an appearance of age, although why they should do so is past my comprehension, since beards are not the mode in the Trobriand Islands, and even the oldest men are practically clean shaven. On the other hand, men past the age established by the Government as that of manhood dislike being placed in the category of the senile and decrepit, and do their best to make out that they are still youthful. One poor old boy was most despondent because the R.M. refused to accept his tax money.

The tax is one pound per head per annum,[1] which is a very substantial proportion of their earned income, since it is only the Europeans that pay wages to the natives in money. But then they are often enabled to increase their incomes by "side-line" work in the way of wood-carving, the manufacture of curios, and pearling. Married men are allowed a rebate of one shilling for each child, and consequently children are often loaned from family to family in order to persuade the R.M. that families are bigger than is actually the case; but as the R.M. keeps a carefully compiled register of all births, marriages and deaths, questions are asked, and these suddenly enlarged families are not easily explained.

The benign Government has arranged that the date of payment of taxes shall fall just after the garden work is completed and the harvest gathered. A Trobriander, as I have already said, loves his garden almost more than anything else, and it is the thought of being separated from it that mainly lessens his desire to go to jail as a passive resister.

The Administration has inaugurated a number of coco-nut plantations, and at certain periods the natives are allowed

[1] This amount differs throughout the territory, and is based upon the possible markets for the labour of the natives of the districts where taxation applies.

to give free labour there in lieu of partial payment of their taxes, the Government in due course reimbursing itself from the sale of the copra.

Much as the Trobriander resents the payment of taxes —and who, after all, does not ?—he receives very considerable value for his money, although it is much to be feared that he does not appreciate this. It is true, he will say, that good tracks have been made, but who made them ? The defaulters who refused to pay ! It is true that medical treatment is provided, but who desired more than the witch-doctors could supply ? It is true also that in districts where there is a mission free education is available, but who will better build a hut, till his garden, or dive for pearls, through knowing the strange learnings of the Dim Dim ?

Money paid for such things, they will argue, is good money lost. They do not realise the advantage of the protection afforded by the Government, which acts as a buffer between them and the white traders, secures for them fair treatment, and prevents them from being exploited. The white man brings them commodities that they covet : tobacco, coloured calicoes, jews' harps and other things. And there are men of culture among the Papuans who recognise that in the main the mode of life of the white man is " very good fashion." But such benefits do not compensate them for the interference with tribal customs that have lasted for innumerable generations. They did not invite the white man, and they do not want him : since he has come they tolerate him, but that is all. And all the while, the subversion of savagery goes on. The Government endeavours to avoid interference with tribal life, but nevertheless the presence of the white man and the establishment of the white man's laws and government must eventually result in the disruption of the native customs, sweeping the Trobrianders into the universal conventionalism which rules the modern world. And they must make their sacrifice to the Moloch of machinery.

CHAPTER SIX

IN TEMPORARY AUTHORITY

I

IT IS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT to sum up the natives' attitude towards myself. As long as I was staying with the R.M. I was regarded as "Government," and consequently as a superior being, intimately associated with the "Big Chief." But later I stayed with traders, and sank in the social scale. Later still, I ran my own establishment, and even lived for periods in the native villages. I was, I am afraid, an unaccountable person, about whom the question was frequently put to other white men: "What fashion this one Dim Dim? I no savvy fashion belong 'im."

At one time I gained considerable respect: for the tale circulated that I was sent by the Big White King himself to make pictures for His Majesty's pleasure and the decoration of his palace; and then there was keen rivalry on the part of the different villages to secure the honour of my presence. But after a while I began to suspect that, mixed with the sense of distinction that I brought, was also an appreciation of the gifts of tobacco, and even that the attitude of the natives towards me had something in common with that of the small boy towards the circus.

Nevertheless I had my period of authority. For a brief while the R.M. was called away, and in his absence I was appointed Deputy-Chief of the local jail. I then had two hundred prisoners directly under my control, and I was not without appreciation of the responsibility. Fortunately, I was not required to "make court," or to worry

over the intricacies of official papers, but I had to control the prison staff, and at the least to see that my prisoners did not take advantage of my timidity and inexperience, and escape.

This, as a matter of fact, they could easily have done. When at work they were supplied with large pruning-knives and hatchets, while the three police-boys who guarded them were armed only with short canes. However, no such incident occurred on a general scale, the only trouble of the sort being when one prisoner ran into the jungle, pursued by a police-boy, who eventually brought him back decorated with a swelling on his head of the size of an egg : the resourceful police-boy having armed himself during the chase with a log of wood. The other prisoners were highly amused at the incident, and the unfortunate victim was the butt of their jests for many a day.

On my first day of duty I received notice of the death of a white trader. In that climate decomposition occurs very rapidly, and immediate burial is essential. In fact, in this case, as the trader had been at the point of death for some days, his grave had been already dug and his coffin prepared. It was my duty to fetch the body, and, as it lay fifteen miles away, I went in the whaleboat as far as the mission station, where the missionary kindly offered me the use of his infinitely more comfortable launch.

As usual, the clouds were banking up with all the signs of heavy weather : the sea was leaden, and scattered rain fell as the clouds came down in a veil of mist that met the water and blotted out the coast. Already a choppy sea was running, and as we nosed into it combers struck the launch with a smother of spray and left her trembling. For two hours or more we fought the sea until at last we came under the lee of the land.

Upon the shoulders of a muscular native boy I was carried over the half-mile of liquid mud to the shore. As

his feet pressed into the mire, crabs, black and loathsome, scattered out of it. Where the swamp met the hard beach immense mangroves, sombre and grim, spread twisted boughs over rank vegetation, their suckers hanging like talons toward roots that writhed in the slime. And the acrid stench of stagnant water mingled with that from rotting leaves and fly-clustered garbage.

A most depressing spot for my none too cheerful undertaking. There were no mourners to this man, who had lived by himself in this health-deserted spot, only dirt, rags, and evil smells. His body lay in a half-ruined house, resting precariously on rotting piles. Stricken palms surrounded this mouldering shack, their decayed leaves dripping sadly upon the rusted iron roof. The coffin had to be brought a distance of seven miles, and I waited outside the hut in the desolate scenery until it came—a crude box knocked together from the wood of old packing-cases, and smeared with white paint. I then approached the house : on the verandah were a number of unclean-looking natives, the frayed ends of their soiled calicoes trailing in the dust of cold ashes as they shuffled over the broken floor to where the corpse lay, covered with a tattered and filthy sheet. Soon a gap opened in the group of natives gathered round the door; in its black cavity the end of the coffin loomed through the shadow, borne upon the shoulders of four natives, who carried it out through the shallows to a canoe, which carried it to the launch, and so it was borne to the Government Station. The cortège passed over the soaked grass to where young trees sheltered a gaping wound in the sodden ground. A cold drizzle wrapped the scene in its damp folds, pouring a million tears upon the saddened earth; the wet soil clung to our soaking feet as we lowered the coffin into its last darkness of cold and silence, burying the secrets of this mystery man in the long, long night of the grave.

II

One morning at 6 a.m. I was informed that His Serene Highness To'uluwa, the King of the Trobriands, had arrived and desired my presence. At the moment, unfortunately, I was in my bath, but even the Deputy of the Representative of His Majesty's Government must not keep a king in suspense, and I wrapped a towel about my loins and took my place with as much of an appearance of dignity as I could muster.

To'uluwa is a man of commanding personality, very tall and broad boned, with a strong face, a large, rather Hebraic nose, rheumy eyes, and heavy lips. He is a man of seventy years, and in his prime must have been very handsome.

Unhappily, despite my desire to create a good impression,[1] I was not fully acquainted with the rules of Trobriand etiquette, and I fear that I treated His Majesty rather scurvily. He was about to depart upon a Kula expedition, and, in accordance with custom, had come to say farewell to the Government Representative, bringing a gift of bananas.

Ceremonial gifts in the Trobriands are almost exclusively of fruit and vegetables. The natives are not greedy, but they think in terms of food as we do in terms of money. A rich man is one who has enough yams stored away to last for himself and his household even if the annual crop should fail. Consequently, to be able to make lavish gifts of yams or fruit implies the very considerable wealth and importance of the donor.

In this instance, when King To'uluwa gave me bananas, showing by the act both how wealthy he was and of what importance he regarded my friendship, I ought, by every law of Trobriand etiquette, to have exhibited *my* wealth, and my sense of the value of *his* condescension by

[1] The custom in the Trobriands is that a gift must be returned with a present, equivalent in value to the one received. This is an invariable rule which is strictly observed; neglect to fulfil this obligation is considered a great breach of etiquette, and anyone breaking this rule would receive severe criticism and be regarded as a very vulgar person.

giving him six, seven, or even eight sticks of tobacco. But unfortunately I did not know that. On the contrary, I knew that the market value of his gift of bananas was but one stick of tobacco : and that I gave him. It was, as I say, treating His Majesty rather scurvily.

Upon previous occasions, To'uluwa had made me gifts of yams and coco-nuts, but these are perishable things, and I had a desire for something that I could keep as a memento of my close association with royalty. I had therefore sent him a message asking him to present me with a carved lime spatula, and he had promised to get me one. On this occasion, after my *faux pas* with the tobacco, I made matters worse by inquiring when the spatula would be delivered. His Majesty said that it would come if his Kula expedition was successful ; but as I did not know what a Kula expedition was, I thought he was merely evading the gift, and I am afraid that I treated him in a manner inappropriate to his rank, and showed some disposition to speed the parting guest. Besides, I was unaccustomed to playing the part of host in such an undecorous attire, and I wanted to resume my clothing. But To'uluwa was not without a sense of humour, and he took my attitude in good part, so that it may be that the prestige of the British Government did not suffer so much as I afterwards feared it might have done.

III

One day, while I was at work in the room that I used as a studio, I was called upon to play the part of doctor. The hospital orderly arrived with a man who, it appeared, had been intriguing with someone else's wife, and had come off none too well in the process. The side of his face was gashed open to the bone. It was a revolting sight, and although there is some foundation for the native belief that all white men in Papua are skilled in the art of " first

aid," I was an exception to the rule. However, I had a reputation to preserve, and I pulled myself together, and inspected the wound with as much of an air of authority as I could muster. I then commanded the orderly to wash and stitch the wound, which fortunately presented no difficulties for him. But the patient seemed to think that an internal application was needed as well as the dressings ; so—on much the same principle as prompted the universal use of iodine and " No. 9 pills " during the war—I prescribed a dose of Epsom salts. If it did no good, it at least could do no harm. I then remembered my duties as locum for the magistrate, and ordered the man to be bound over to keep the peace and to come up for trial on the R.M.'s return. In fact, I flatter myself that I handled the matter with considerable success.

IV

I was also faced from time to time with complex problems with regard to my prisoners in the jail. The R.M. had detailed certain work to be done in his absence ; but apparently both prisoners and police-boys wanted to " show off " during his absence. The prisoners showed a competitive spirit in trying to get through their work with exceptional speed, and the police-boys seemed each to consider himself responsible for their good behaviour. I, of course, bestowed compliments on everyone impartially, and then retired to think out a new method of keeping them employed.

But as a matter of fact the fuzzy-haired representatives of law and order were not always so conscientious as I foolishly imagined. There was a method in this speeding up of the work, for in due course the timber and materials that had been stacked ran short, and I was told that it would be necessary to get new supplies from the jungle. In my innocence I asked how this was to be done, and

received the reply that teams of prisoners could be sent to fetch what was needed. The suggestion seemed eminently sensible, and I agreed without being suspicious, even when a new team was made up each day, and the timber was always sought in a fresh part of the island, nor even when the teams always returned at an exceptionally late hour. It was not until I discovered that the necessary materials could have been procured within the immediate vicinity of the jail that I realised that even Government servants are not quite incorruptible! Of course the police-boys were receiving "small feller tabac" from the prisoners for providing the necessary excuse for them to pay visits to their homes!

But it was not until considerably later that I made that discovery, and meanwhile I went about doing my best to impress everybody with my acuteness as a prison governor. Frequently I would have the prisoners paraded for inspection, and although I hadn't the slightest idea what to inspect, I would walk up and down the ranks, stick in hand and filled with my own importance, and assume an eagle-eyed expression as I peered into corners. The staff had the grace to appear suitably impressed.

INTERLUDE

A shrill whistle—"Police fall in!" The crisp order cut sharply through the still air; the police raced across the sun-soaked area between their quarters and the house. "Hello, a rising," thought I, as I arrived at the R.M.'s office, where rifles and ball cartridge were being issued to the police. The R.M. answered my look of interrogation with "Jap poachers; I think there is going to be trouble, but I shan't let the 'birds' give me the slip this time. I'm going to chase 'em up, over the rim of the world if necessary. We may be away a long time; coming?" "Sure thing," I replied. Only recently news had filtered through of a

Jap rising in Thursday Island, a story which lost none of its colour in the transition. No authenticated details had come through, and for all we knew there might be another war in progress.

Not the slightest breeze stirred the sultry atmosphere; the whaleboat (the only craft on the station) under oars would have been utterly useless in a stern chase, and the R.M.'s own launch was out of commission. Fortunately a trader happened to be visiting the island; he offered the loan of his auxiliary ketch, which the R.M. eagerly accepted. Away out on the horizon a ship lay at anchor, a strange-looking craft, but she did not appear to possess the evil rakish lines of a poaching schooner. I mentally sifted all the various craft that I had seen during my maritime experiences, but could not find a type that fitted this curious ship. With the sun beating upon the wide lagoon in a million specks of light, the ship was but an ill-defined shape limned against the distant horizon. We could make nothing of her.

As usual, there was a "hold up" in the engine-room, and the trader's remarks made the hot air even hotter as he heaped vituperation upon the head of the unfortunate boy who was endeavouring to coax the engine into life. Meanwhile we gazed anxiously ahead, expecting to see the mystery ship slip her anchor and vanish into the haze. At last we felt the welcome vibration of the engine, and we began to gather way, the water cleaving from the bows in long thin ripples, which scintillated with colour like spirals of blown glass, broadening out fanwise over the smooth surface of the lagoon. We sped down the channel past the village of Kavataria, whose beach was lined with watching crowds, brown specks on the receding shore. As the engine was opened full out the racing fly-wheel shook the boat with the force of its revolutions; our speed seemed slow, deadly slow for such a mission, and we waited in tense expectation of that which might lay ahead. Man-

grove swamps and sandy beaches opened up and folded back as we slid rapidly past the shore. Right ahead was a dinghy manned by a crew of three, a black speck which moved uncertainly against the glare of light. The police-boys stood to their rifles as we overhauled it. We were greatly puzzled. In the action of the dinghy's crew there was nothing suggestive of men engaged in a covert enterprise, and the trim of the dinghy with her highly varnished freeboard and dazzling white fenders was not the class of boat one would expect to find in these waters, be the nature of her business legitimate or otherwise; and certainly she was not Navy. One of the rowers was rigged in the white uniform of a ship's officer, the other was attired in the blue jersey and sailor cap of an A.B., while the third man was seated in the stern sheets, dressed in white pants, loose shirt, and topee. As we drew alongside, one of the dinghy's crew caught hold of our bulwarks, and hailed us in a broad American drawl: "Waal say, is it far to the shore? It sure is almighty hot." Then he caught sight of the armed police. "Waal, I guess you had better come along to my little old tub and throw your eyes over my papers."

In this cockleshell of an open boat, without a vestige of shelter from the blistering heat of the tropic sun, they had set out to row a distance of six or seven miles; they wasted no time in clambering into the shelter of our awning. As we closed up, our supposed Jap poacher proved to be a magnificent yacht, her sides an unbroken line of gleaming white, relieved by the shining rings of the brass rimmed ports; the highly polished brasswork of her deck fittings reflecting back the sun in blades of light, as she rolled languidly to the gentle swell, tugging lightly at her cable; and each time she lifted, a brine-soaked line of copper sparkled yellow in the sun. We clambered over the rail, and dropped upon the snow-white decks of this palatial pleasure boat.

It was such a yacht, and such a picture as might be found between the pages of a novel, or screened at the cinema.

The dark caulking upon her spotless decks followed the neat, clean lines of the ship. From davit cleats and bollards, ropes hung in ordered loops, and others, coiled with precision, lay neatly flat on the deck, where hard purple shadows moved up and across to the roll of the heaving ship ; while the awning, stretched taut to the stanchions, reflected the glare from the sea upon its uncreased surface, and the brighter glow from lavish paintwork and brass suffused the darker shadows with its radiance. Upon the after skylight, all in filmy white, reclined a pretty woman, the clean breeze blowing strands of hair across her delicate pink cheeks. A contrast, this fashionable butterfly, to the bedragglement of our raiment !

The R.M. was in white ducks, with a shirt open at the throat, and a helmet ; the trader's grease-streaked pants were held in place by a piece of cord, the rolled-up sleeves of his stained and sun-tanned shirt revealing muscular arms, his lined and sun-dried face shaded by a broad-brimmed hat. My shirt was paint-smeared, soiled, and torn ; equally discoloured were my khaki shorts ; my naked toes protruded from holes in my tattered and brine-stained canvas shoes, and a weathered and battered hat was jammed upon my head. The police-boys in their scarlet braided uniforms of dark blue serge stood at attention by the rail, the brass caps of their cartridges in the leather belts catching specks of light from the sun.

Filling the space between awning and deck was a bright blue sky and bluer sea, with a palm-enclustered coastline painted on the horizon. Of the yacht itself, nothing that mechanical science could devise had been omitted. She was a magnificent toy, almost too luxurious for so transient a purpose.

There followed three hectic days, crammed with incidents and an interchange of visits between yacht and shore, and invitations which embraced the nine white inhabitants of the Trobriands. The yacht's party of four, which included

a cinematographer and Dale Collins, the author whose powerful novel *Ordeal* has since achieved such eminence, came ashore in due course. My host and myself exerted ourselves to make their brief visit interesting ; and to this end we took them to Gumilibaba, the largest village on the island. Mr. —— desired to hustle, but a sprained ankle impeded his progress. The R.M. therefore had a litter constructed for him, and carried by four hefty boys. " Waal, I guess I can get a move on now," remarked our guest as he climbed up ; and he did, for at a given signal the bearers bolted with the litter, the unfortunate victim of the frolic bouncing alarmingly as the delighted bearers stumbled wildly along the rugged track overhanging palm-leaves and obstructing branches knocking off his helmet and brushing over his head. We called to the boys to slow down, but they paid no heed to our cries ; they presumably concluded that we were urging them to still greater efforts, and so increased their speed, until the madly racing litter and its jolting occupant were swallowed up in the jungle. I strongly suspect that the elated bearers turned deaf ears to our calls, deciding to complete the joke according to their own lights. We caught up with our thoroughly shaken, though highly amused, guest in the village, where the perspiring boys waited in gleeful expectation for further escapades. Whilst the cinematographer endeavoured to do the work of a month in one afternoon, Mr. —— rushed round with his camera in an effort to snap everything and everybody. Crowds of excited natives stiffened into soldierly ranks as the lens swung round on them ; some scrambled into huts, and hastily bedecked themselves in joyous anticipation of facing the " glass long bokis " (camera), whilst others gazed entranced at the wonderful Sinabada. Stray curls peeped from under her wide-brimmed hat and lay in wisps of gold against her skin, her modish silk costume setting off her slim figure to advantage. And what a picture she made, this dainty product of civilisation, sitting on the platform

of a yam house, surrounded by a bevy of bronze maidens, their frizzy hair gorgeously adorned with scarlet hibiscus, standing out in bold contrast to the light dress over which they bent, as with considerable diffidence they felt over the soft texture of the silk dress and stockings of this amazing and dazzling white woman. The Trobrianders are connoisseurs of beauty, and here was a Sinabada, the like of whom they had never seen before—and possibly never will again, for the wilds of Papua are no place for the elegant maids of the fashionable world.

One night we were to dine on the yacht. Naturally enough our host and hostess wished to imbibe something of the life and colour of the country they were visiting; therefore we were particularly requested to come attired in our customary bedragglement. But there were those of our party who were so dull as to lay claim to respectability, and consequently trunks and boxes were ransacked for such remnants of "glad rags" as might still have escaped the ravages of mildew, insects, and the scissor-like attention of cockroaches; awkward fingers fumbled with collar studs and ties, and unaccustomed throats shifted uneasily in the throttling confinement of neckware. After meticulous brushing of hair, scrubbing of faces, and a changing round of coats to obtain the best fit for each man, we forgathered at the house, bestarched and uncomfortable; moreover, terribly afraid to move for fear of spoiling the crease in our considerably mildewed and iron-moulded but well-boiled pants which were doubtfully stable in the seat.

The party having collected, we walked along the jetty, stepping carefully to avoid soiling our recently whitened shoes. Great masses of dark clouds were banking up ominously, the billowy mounds on their toppling heights catching light from the waning day. Lightning flickered across the sky. From afar came the low moaning of a rising wind, which gently stirred the palm-leaves, then

died away, and left them hanging listless in the sultry air. A fish flung itself out of the calm leaden water and splashed back, making an ever-widening circle of ripples, which spread and flattened out until once more the smooth surface remained unruffled. Native voices travelled across the water, clear, distinct in the dead hush.

We waited under the darkening sky for the ketch which was to convey us to the yacht, which was anchored eight miles out in the deep water beyond the reef. The boat arrived. Simultaneously a blinding flash and a deafening crack ripped open heaven's flood-gates, and the tremendous volume of water dropped as if in a solid mass. With the first rush of the downpour our clothing was beaten close to our bodies, and clung like classic drapery, hanging in graceful folds about us ; while collars curled up stringwise about our streaming necks. We were ferried across in the small dinghy, feeling our way through the blinding deluge to where the labouring ketch lay straining at her anchor. All aboard, we started on our nightmare voyage. The boat was small, the party larger than she could accommodate with comfort or safety. We piled up in a pyramid on the hatch, crouching under such shelter as the badly leaking awning could provide ; cascades ran down over us, the limited space precluding moving out of their way. Water poured off gear in torrents, and leapt to meet the pounding rain that hammered on the deck. The ketch staggered in the deluge, hemmed in by the wall of driving rain. The steersman's long hair stuck streaming to his head, water ran off him, gushed in rivulets over his powerful muscles, his bronze skin pitted with white where the driven rain thudded upon him. As she reeled, the unballasted ketch rolled at a dangerous angle. A trader's wife, whose avoirdupois was as generous as her nature, elected to go below—to ease the weight on deck.

Night had closed in ; we were now sailing in a black void, lurching horribly. Occasionally the yellow flicker of the

yacht's lights pierced the murk; miles off it seemed until a flash of lightning revealed her white sides, close to us, a phantom ship on a velvet background that vanished in the gloom. Presently we rose on a giant comber, the bowsprit pointing almost vertically. As she paused we could look down upon the decks of the heaving yacht that rolled to her scuppers in the heavy sea ; then with a shudder we plunged into the vortex, and were swallowed in the black trough. The yacht's enormous bulk seemed poised as though about to drop and crush us ; then it lurched, and fell away in the surge. Once, twice, thrice, a rope was thrown ; the fourth attempt was successful, and the line was made fast. Then came the hazardous task of getting aboard. Each time that the ketch clawed her way heavenward, one of us leapt aboard the yacht as we came level with her sloping deck, and were hauled inboard by the waiting crew. I was wondering how the lady with the generous proportions would manage the difficult feat. Light as a feather she leapt across the intervening space of turgid waters, and with remarkable agility clambered over the rail, making a decidedly better performance of it than I had done. I landed against the yacht's side spread-eagled, and endeavoured to embrace the entire ship in my struggles to avoid slipping back. The crew jerked me inboard, nearly ripping my none too staple pants off me in the process. I felt apprehensive as the generous lady's infant was passed from ketch to yacht.

The party safely aboard, next thing was to wring ourselves out ; water squelched from our shoes and poured off our raiment, young lakes sprang up wherever we had been standing. The vivid brilliance of the deck lights for a moment dazzled us.

The after deck was closed in with canvas, and the dining-table which was set athwart ships was festively adorned. Presently the storm abated considerably ; with a few whiskies aboard, the soothing smell of good cigars, and our

clothes less sodden, affairs were taking a rosier hue ; nevertheless the yacht rolled uncomfortably. The two mission sisters, having reached the limit of their endurance, considered that it was high time to express their disapproval of the weather in the approved fashion when at sea, so were sick. I was in a fair way to manifesting my disapprobation in an equally concrete form, but decided to have another whisky instead. . . . I vaguely remember clambering over the ship's side into the lurching ketch, of being sped on our journey by the strong beams of the yacht's searchlight, of missing the beacon that marked the deep water passage, and of running aground in a welter of blinding rain and wind-lashed sea. But that is my last recollection of that night.

PLATE 6.—A TROBRIAND DWELLING-HUT, TEAVI.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

I SET UP MY EASEL

I

THE VILLAGES IN THE TROBRIAND ISLANDS differ considerably in size, and to some extent in plan. Inland they are almost invariably built in the form of a circle, but on the coast the coral outcrop and the irregularity of the land often prevent this, so that they are built in straight streets, or if necessary without any geometrical plan at all.

Some of the villages are a collection of hamlets, each with a different name, but apparently united for purposes of "local government" as one village. Others, not necessarily with a greater population, have a headman to each hamlet. Probably the question of the ownership of the land on which the villages are built is the primary factor in this distribution.

Gumilibaba, the largest village on the islands, has a population of some three hundred. It stands in a large clearing in the jungle. In the middle, a big circular space is surrounded by a ring of yam houses or stores ; these are built on piles, with pandanus-thatched roofs, and walls of large round logs laid crossways upon one another, so as to leave wide interstices through which the yams can be seen. Some of the larger yam houses possess quite an impressive appearance. They measure thirty to forty feet high from the ground to the ridge pole ; the curved planks bordering the gables, and some of the transversal boards being richly carved and relieved with red, white and black paint.

Some are decorated with large white cowrie shells and streamers of dried pandanus leaves, while at the end of some of the logs, carved in full relief, are canoe prows, birds and fish. Many of these yam stores have a platform in front, where the elders sit in the evening to chat and smoke, and where visitors are given the seat of honour.

Concentrically with these yam houses are the dwelling huts, in an outer circle, leaving a street between the two rows. These huts are built upon the ground, and the only opening into them is a door, making a rectangular patch of intense black against the light yellow of the plaited palm-leaf walls. Each hut is occupied by one family: adolescent and grown-up boys and girls live respectively in bachelor and spinster houses, which shelter from four to six or more inhabitants. The élite, such as chiefs and natives of rank, possess their own special houses, and also separate quarters for their wives, who in their own sphere are important and exalted persons.

The dwelling huts are used for little but sleeping quarters and as a protection from wet weather. The majority of the domestic life and work of the village is performed in the street, between the huts and the yam houses, which is nearly always a scene of considerable activity.

Pigs and dogs are a prominent feature, particularly the latter—hideous creatures with large pointed ears and sore-festered frames; their unearthly howls are unlike the bark of any dogs I have ever heard. The heavy foliage of the surrounding jungle and the clusters of tall coco-nut palms throw the village almost into twilight. Patches of deep azure sky show through the interstices of the heavy foliage, and shafts of dazzling sunlight pierce the leaves like swords of gold, making spots of brilliant greens and yellows, the heavy purple shadows in the jungle behind the huts appearing even deeper by the contrast. The ground on the outskirts of the village is littered with dead leaves, pearl shells, and coco-nut husks deeply overshadowed by

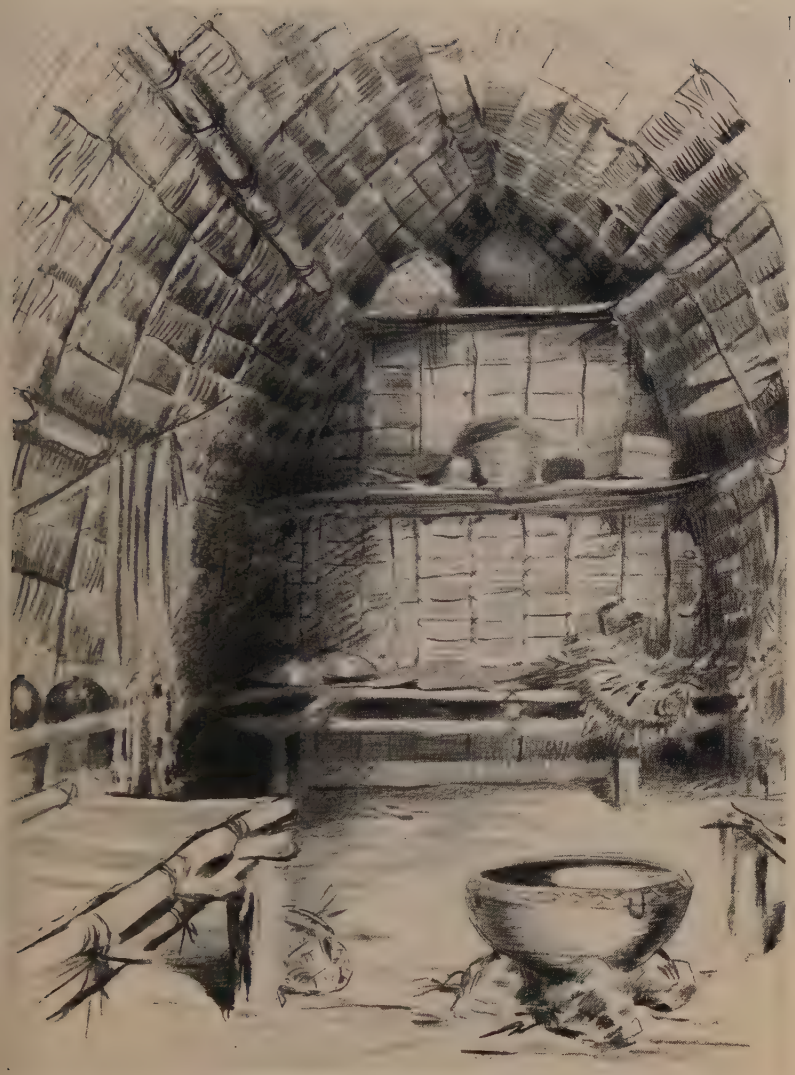

PLATE 7.—INTERIOR OF A HUT.

The shelf at the end and on the left are the beds; the spheres above the left-hand bed are coco-nut water-bottles, in which the drinking water is stored. The cauldron in the foreground is of Amphletton manufacture.

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the tangled vines and jungle growth which encroach upon the confines of the village. The scene is a study in gold, greens, and silver greys.

II

When I made my first entrance into the village, I was provided with an escort of two police-boys, and my appearance awakened considerable interest. By the time I reached the centre of the village, the spot was crowded with sightseers. The village constable came to meet me, stood to attention, and smartly saluted; so that I experienced the sensation of being an exalted potentate on an official tour.

I was conducted to the platform of the central yam house, a mat of dried pandanus leaf was placed before me, and I was asked to be seated. The inhabitants of the village sat round in a wide semicircle, and the chief, Metakata, came to pay me homage.[1] He commanded that a bunch of four green coco-nuts be presented to me, and I, remembering my experiences with King To'uluwa, ordered a police-boy to give eight sticks of tobacco in return. One of the nuts was shorn of its husk, and the top cut off. I drank some of the milk, and graciously gave the remainder of the nuts for distribution amongst the spectators. The chief then seated himself on the ground, took a small piece of the tobacco, and with equal graciousness gave the rest to his followers. For a short while everyone smoked, and then the chief rose to his feet, made a slight obeisance to me, and withdrew.

I remained on the platform, uncertain what to do next, and rather embarrassed at finding myself so much in the limelight. Before me was practically the whole population of the village. There were wrinkled, emaciated and toothless men and women, the majority with shaven heads; girls, some inclined to ogle saucily, and others apparently

[1] The customary gift of a chief to European visitors.

rather coy; piccaninnies with distended paunches and abnormally large heads, sucking their fingers as they stared up at me; other and bolder piccaninnies who crawled forward for a closer view of the fearsome Taubada, but, frightened at their temerity, scrambled back to the refuge of maternal arms. Young men, well built and muscular, gazed at me speculatively, cogitating as to whom I might be, and how my power and influence would affect them.

The girls nudged each other and giggled; someone in the crowd made a very audible remark, the men smiled, the girls became highly excited, then the entire assembly broke into unrestrained laughter. I endeavoured to maintain a stoic expression, waiting in anticipatory interest, while meditating what should be my next move. I looked at the police-boy for inspiration, and he returned my gaze somewhat quizzically. I lit a cigarette, and as the crowd was becoming excited—particularly the younger girls, who hugged each other, flashing mischievous glances from under their lashes—I decided that it was about time to make a move, and did so, losing much of my dignity in the process.

I subsequently discovered that the cause of the mirth and excitement was due to speculation as to which of these attractive girls I would select as a temporary bride.

III

Having made my debut and taken a brief survey of possible subjects, I decided to start work on the following day. But when I told my host of my intention he said that I must have some carriers. Being used to the civilised practice of carrying one's own parcels, I failed to see the necessity, but he insisted that "fashion belong Papua" must be observed, and in due course he paraded before me a dozen swarthy boys, each with a share of my kit: one carrying my palette, another my easel, another a chair, another a canvas awning, another utensils for making tea,

and so on. Consequently my entrance into the village was even more imposing than on the previous day.

In this village I had my first experience of the difficulties of painting in the tropics. In other climes all that was required was to select my subject and begin work ; but in this country it was quite different. For obvious reasons it was impossible to stand in the open sunlight, but if I selected the shade of the palms there was danger from falling nuts, which, dropping from a height of from forty to sixty or more feet, might injure or even kill me.

When I had selected a position which was neither in the sun nor immediately under the cluster of nuts, the point of view was not suitable. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to take up an arbitrary viewpoint. When I prepared my painting kit, I soon began to realise that the elaborate paraphernalia which my host had provided for me was none too much under present conditions. Anyway, here at last I should be free from the noise and crash of cities ; forgetting the nerve-racking turmoil of civilisation under the softly waving palms and soothing sky.

On my arriving in the village most of the inhabitants were absent, working in their gardens, and consequently my audience was limited to a few natives, mostly old people and very young children ; but as the villagers straggled in from their gardens, so did my audience grow in proportion, until soon I was surrounded by an immense crowd. Suddenly the air was filled with the sound of rending and swishing, similar to the hissing of a falling bomb ; everyone shouted, and in a wild stampede the audience fled. My view was then obliterated by utter darkness, as with a resounding crash I went down, engulfed in a welter of easel, chairs, bottles, leaves, and a shower of flying brushes. I thought, as I grovelled in the débris, that I had been struck by a meteor.

When I was extricated from the confusion, my face and clothes were streaked with the rainbow hues of my palette.

What had happened was that one of the enormous palm-leaves had fallen to the ground ; it was expansive, heavy and all-embracing, and I was directly beneath it. Fortunately I was wearing a helmet and the spine of the leaf did not hit me ; so that I suffered nothing more than a severe shaking and much loss of dignity. As my paint-besmeared face emerged from the tangled muddle of leaves, which clung about me, shouts of uncontrolled mirth rent the welkin. It was an undignified situation.

With face smarting from the application of turpentine, and feeling decidedly " cheap," I recommenced my study. As the work progressed the interest of the crowd increased, and when I started to put in the figures their excitement overstepped all bounds ; the younger children hugged each other and jumped up and down ; some rushed to the spot I was depicting and sat in rows, then ran back again to see if I had put them in the picture. Mothers with piccaninnies in their arms leant forward to obtain a closer view, while the infants made furtive dabs with little brown fingers at the vermilion upon my palette ; one was successful, but not liking the flavour, howled its disapproval into my ear. The riotous babel became deafening. The crowd pushed and jostled each other in their eagerness to get into the front row, those at the back pushing those in front almost on top of me, these latter scared to death at their unintentional encroachment. Piccaninnies screamed at their enforced proximity to the fearsome Taubada. To obtain a better view some youths clambered on to the roof of an adjacent hut, which immediately caved in and projected them—a writhing mass of legs and arms—into its depths, and brought out the irate householder and his relatives to belabour them. Despite the unbounded excitement of these primitive people, however, not once did I suffer the impertinences that I have experienced when painting in British countries, where people have thrust their heads between myself and the canvas for a closer view.

In the short space of an hour the sun shifted so rapidly that it was impossible to continue the study. I was thankful for the respite, since the noise and confusion had been appalling, and not understanding the language, I could not try to stop it. Not that I think it would have been possible, for the people had never seen anything like this before : the projection of objects in relief upon a perfectly flat surface, combined with the representation of distance, colour and light. They seemed frankly puzzled. I allowed them to view the canvas at close range. Realising that they must not touch it, they approached as near as they thought compatible, peering closely at the brush strokes, and then standing back from the canvas. They discussed the strange result, not in the manner of the idly curious, but with seeming intelligence, pointing out to each other the huts and various details of the scene which I had depicted, and rough as was my study, they appeared to be able to " read " it quite clearly. Some of them had seen photographs and illustrated papers, but naturally without knowing how they were produced. It was merely another form of Dim Dim magic ; and here was one of the magicians under their eyes. Surely this amazing Taubada must have made many offerings to his sorcerer to enable him to perform such miracles.

I have already mentioned that little or nothing that the white man does surprises the Papuan ; here was an exception to the rule, because it was a subject within the range of their comprehension. They understand the use of pigments, but only in its application as flat line or to relieve the intaglio of their wood-carvings, and the range of their palette is limited to red, black, white, and sometimes yellow. Therefore my work to them must have seemed an astounding performance, almost magical in its execution, particularly as they attribute their own beautiful wood-carvings to the influence of the spirit-world, from which they derive their inspiration.

It had been a hectic, fatiguing and interesting afternoon, but from my viewpoint not particularly successful. Whilst my boys prepared tea, I packed up my kit, the folding of my sketching easel creating another exciting diversion for my audience, who were greatly intrigued when I twiddled the screws and gadgets and unfolded it again to demonstrate to them how it worked. This I did twice, to their immense delight and satisfaction.

It would have been interesting to hear the conversations round the fires that night in the village ; doubtless the day's unprecedented events would be a theme of conversation for many a day.

IV

After the disturbances I experienced when painting in Gumilibaba, I sought a more tranquil *milieu*, selecting Kavataria village as possessing possible quietude. But there I was to discover that while the Trobriand ladies in general are decidedly free, the maidens of Kavataria are the boldest, naughtiest, and most brazen of them all. The girls of other villages do exhibit a modicum of discretion when making their advances, but the Kavatarians observe no restrictions.

I set out my kit on the platform of a yam house, and settled down to work. The customary audience gathered round, but remained perfectly orderly. Suddenly my pocket became animated, and my astonished gaze fell upon a girl who, with unwavering *sang-froid*, was feeling in my pocket for tobacco. For a moment I was speechless at her audacity ; recovering, I expressed my disapproval. The girl naïvely remarked that as I possessed some tobacco, would I not give her some ? " Yes, yes : *igau* " (by and by), I replied, irritably enough. Momentarily pacified, she remained quiet for a time, and then she stopped my hand as I worked, and asked for a piece of chalk " to make some *ginigini* " (drawings). A gave it to her, and she began to

trace patterns in the chalk on her arms and breasts. But soon she grew tired of this, and tried to coax me to share a piece of betel nut with her. I was becoming angry at her importunities by this time, and I told her so. Undismayed, she mimicked my speech and gestures with such drollery that I made the mistake of intensifying the uncomfortable situation by bursting into laughter.

It was a languid afternoon, and the crowd which had gathered round had become tired, and had gone away to sleep in their huts or under the palms. But this girl had other ideas as to how an afternoon should be spent when a Taubada came to sit in the village. Maybe she was the belle of the place : certainly she was very captivatingly dressed, with hibiscus blossom and gay feathers in her hair. To ignore a pretty girl is always dangerous ; and when I, in my folly, attempted to ignore this one, after my lapse into laughter, she took it as a sign of encouragement, sat down beside me, moved closer, and put her arms caressingly around my neck. It was disconcerting, particularly as at that moment the inhabitants of the village seemed to have decided that by sleeping in their huts they might miss something worth seeing. I was compelled to disappoint them ; but I was only able to do so at the price of a precipitate retreat.

V

Since this was how I had fared in the full daylight, what, I wondered, would happen when I made my studies by moonlight ? My question was soon answered, for I made the experiment that very night. It was a late moon, and when I reached the village I was surprised to find a deserted street, which was most unusual, for during the moon village activities invariably continued until a very late hour : not even the night watchmen with the spears were visible.

The full moon hung in the purple sky, casting its pure

light upon the mystery and beauty of the village. It was a picture to be painted in soft tones and rich dark shadows, purple and black. The fronds of the palms, where they reflected the light, were shimmering streaks of silver against the sky. Huts stood out, black silhouettes against the lagoon, dull gold in the light.

Enchanted with the subject, and glad to find myself uninterrupted, I set up my easel and began the work. But in a few moments I heard a rustle of skirts, and hand in hand two girls approached me, the clusters of white flowers, which are always substituted at night for the red hibiscus in their hair showing pale in the uncertain light. They asked for tobacco—a request which is recognised amongst them as the proper method of opening an intrigue with a Taubada. As they received no encouragement, they melted into the shadows as silently as they had come, and I resumed my studies, hoping against hope that that would be the only interruption.

Suddenly the ground at my feet broke into song—at least that was the effect of what happened. A number of piccaninnies had crept up to give me a surprise—an entirely successful attempt—and now they were sitting in a semicircle at my feet, their dark outlines hardly visible in the deep shadows. From behind huts and palms, other piccaninnies were peeping, invisible but for the dots of light where the moonlight was reflected on the smooth shining surface of their dome-shaped heads. I do not know the meaning of their song ; it may possibly have been a request for the gifts that they seem to expect a Taubada to produce at every moment. At any rate, when the song was finished they all swarmed around me, clamouring, with signs that could not be misunderstood, for tobacco. I gave them some ; but I must admit that I was surprised when they seemed satisfied, and disappeared. I was also pleased.

Then silence reigned again. But it was soon broken once more by the rustling of feminine attire ; and, behold,

standing beside me was the brazen girl of my adventure of that afternoon! She also began the not unexpected request for tobacco, but by now I was forewarned. I trust I was not uncivil; but at any rate I was sufficiently discouraging to cause her to waste no further time in my neighbourhood. I have no doubt that easier conquests awaited her elsewhere.

VI

During the next few weeks weather conditions made work in the open impossible. There were grey, sodden days when torrential rains deluged the country: in one night eight inches of rain were registered. There were days so dark that artificial light became necessary. It was intensely heavy, muggy weather, when myriads of insects made life almost unbearable, and the effluvia from the swamps polluted the air with the stench of foul vegetation.

This weather was trying enough to the white men, but it affected the natives even more, the heavy rains producing a stupefying effect upon them. For as long as four or five days at a stretch they would remain in their huts, keeping fires burning the whole time, with no egress for the stifling smoke except the interstices in the palm-thatched roofs.

The appearance of a village on a wet day was extraordinary, the dense columns of smoke trailing out of every crevice in the huts, as if the whole village were smouldering. And when the inhabitants finally leave their confinement they reek of smoke, like kippers in a curing shed. Wet weather depresses the Trobrianders, and it is not entirely the dispiriting effect of the leaden skies and heaviness of the atmosphere which induces this spirit. These people are naturally industrious, and their work is largely performed in the open; consequently the rain curtails their activities.

One of the hospital huts was converted for me into a studio: it was a building of native construction,

20 ft. by 18 ft., with a section of the roof cut away to admit light. It was commodious, and served the purpose ; but on sunny days it leaked light which penetrated in hard spots through even the smallest crevices (and there are many in a hut constructed of palm-leaf), so that it became almost impossible to concentrate the eyes upon the canvas or model ; even double lining the walls with palm mats was inadequate in entirely blocking out the light, so dazzling is the glare of the tropic sun.

This studio was appropriate to its jungle situation. The palm walls of the long rectangular room were lashed with vine to the heavy wall-plates, and to the uprights of knotted golden red logs, and to the thinner branches which filled the spaces in between. One of the posts was rainbow-hued with the scrapings of my palette. From the roof an old sail hung in great sagging folds, discoloured and insect riddled, warm grey where it caught the light. At the far end of the room my model would sit, her rich bronze skin thrown into bold relief by this background of sailcloth.

Fortunately, the question of obtaining models did not seem likely to present great difficulty. I could have prisoners from the jail or inmates of either sex from the hospital. It seemed a case of *embarras de richesses.*

But after all it was not quite so simple as it had appeared. For the first few days there was a rush of applicants from the jail, this untried work seeming likely to be easier, at any rate, than the alternative of stone-breaking. I chose a good-looking native and set to work. But on the second day, the model did not put in an appearance. On inquiry, the news was broken to me that I was not likely to see him again. He had been in prison for non-payment of tax, and a friend had appeared and paid the sum for him. By that time he was miles away, in his own village. So that picture was left unfinished.

It is to be feared that that model must have found time before his hurried departure to explain to his fellow-

PLATE 8.—I SHOW A JUNGLE GIRL THE PICTURE OF KADAKAVINA.

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prisoners what "sitting" for the Taubada really meant: the cruel exactions of not being allowed to move, the Taubada's wrath if one did but scratch one's head. And so it was discovered that even stone-breaking in the rain, which every Papuan detests, was preferable to this new form of punishment.

These native models, particularly the ladies, varied in the matter of posing quite as much as do models in other lands: some were absolutely wooden and could never assume the required position; others posed with a natural ease and grace which were delightful to see.

Some of the younger children were especially adaptable, although, naturally, the very youngest were fidgety, and decidedly nervous of me. Indeed, often they were only kept in position by their parents, who kept them in order partly because I was "Government" and partly in expectation of rewards of tobacco. I had to watch closely that I did not overtire the children, and even then they would sometimes break into tears through my exactions, while others, afraid to speak, would regard their parents with a look of pathetic inquiry as to how long this cruel Taubada would continue to victimise them. But on the whole these quaint little brown mites were remarkably good and patient. Some of them, when they beheld the result of their sittings, would be very excited, and would bring their friends to see their portraits. Some would even beg for another sitting, or offer their friends as models.

I wish my adult models had been equally obliging. Some were critical, some even hypercritical. One damsel was greatly annoyed because I had not made what she considered a good likeness of her: or more probably, I suppose, because the picture did not represent her as being quite as pretty as she considered herself. In any case, with a swishing and a rustle of her palm-leaf skirt, she flounced out of the studio in disdain, leaving me wondering whether she had gone to bring the whole tribe to wreak vengeance.

Once, in search of a really striking girl with whose beauty I could surprise the world, I went to the girls' hut. My approach created a great flutter in the feminine circle : for they attributed my visit, at first, to entirely different motives. The idea caused them great excitement, but left them quite unembarrassed. However, I called the hospital orderly to act as interpreter for me, and to explain the nature of my quest.

Eventually I decided upon a girl named Kadakavina, who, although somewhat short in stature, possessed a fine figure and a face that in a quaint way was very attractive. The day being far advanced, I wanted her to come to the studio immediately, but, true to her sex, she refused to come until she had titivated, and I had to wait. When in due course she arrived, I found that she had painted one side of her face a jet-black, with a border of white spots and relieved with streaks of scarlet ! To my thinking, it was not an improvement. Moreover, at each subsequent sitting she arrived with a different scheme of facial decoration.

I was also both amused and annoyed that she assumed a grandiloquent and somewhat assertive air. Nevertheless, I was full of enthusiasm for my subject, and I selected a pose and started work. Before I could do more than sketch in the outline she declared that she wanted tobacco. The request appeared to be made in perfectly good faith and with no ulterior motive ; so I gave it to her, and then she was quiet.

For the first few sittings the novelty kept her amused, but after a while she grew restless. In order to palliate the monotony for her, I suggested that she should bring a friend to talk to her while she sat. She did so, but though it amused her it made my work increasingly difficult, for the two would while away the time with music on a jews' harp or with practising the words of a song for the approaching dance season. And then the friend would

PLATE 9.—KADAKAVINA.

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grow bored, and would curl up on the floor and go to sleep, leaving me with my problem of quieting a restless model again unsolved.

Still, I got along fairly well on the whole until one day, when the girl sent a message to the effect that she was ill and could not come. Kadakavina was a flighty young wife, who did not always behave with conventional decorum, and when I heard of her indisposition I wondered whether she had been poisoned by her husband. This might have been the case in spite of the fact that she was said to be only slightly indisposed: for the Papuan is an expert in such matters, and does not administer his poison in large doses, but covertly and by slow degrees.

I decided to go to the girls' hut to investigate, and there I discovered the truant, half asleep and wholly annoyed, but apparently in perfect health. I persuaded her to come back to the studio, but it was a wasted effort, for she just sat and sulked, indignant and tearful by turns. Not even gifts of tobacco would placate her, and once I caught her putting out her tongue at me.

It was perhaps unfortunate that at this time I was experiencing considerable difficulty over the drawing of the hips. Considering her meagre raiment and the Trobrianders' freedom in sex matters, I thought it would be quite permissible to ask her to take off her skirt. But I was entirely wrong! In making the request I offended the native conventions very seriously, and still further annoyed her.[1]

On the whole, matters with this model were extremely difficult, and the difficulty increased as time went on. Her attendance became irregular, and eventually it seemed that she did not intend to come at all. In sheer desperation I asked the R.M. to find out why she was being so obstinate.

[1] I afterwards learnt that this is a subject on which the Trobriand maidens are extremely particular. If girls who are bathing in the lagoon happen to see a canoe with boys in it, even though it be as much as two miles away, they will immediately put on their skirts. And when bathing off the beach of a village they invariably wear a special skirt as a bathing dress.

She said she was frightened. The R.M. asked what on earth there was to be frightened about in sitting before such a peaceful Taubada as myself. And then the whole secret came out. She did not mind my painting her, she did not really mind having to sit still for long periods, provided she received tobacco in payment; but she was terrified when the Taubada made faces at her, as he did while he worked!

Perhaps I do look rather fearsome when I am endeavouring to concentrate upon a difficult work. We explained to her the reason of my glowering, and she said she would sit again, but she never did.

Kadakavina was the only Trobriand girl I ever had sit to me for any length of time; after this, one sitting was the most I could obtain. The novelty worn off, nothing would induce them to sit again, which necessitated my taking one after another in an ambitious effort to convert the entire female population into artist's models. The novelty for most of them lay in the fascination of my dazzling palette. The Trobriand flappers were simply unable to withstand it. Each young woman on arrival to sit made for the palette, and the one mirror of the household, indulging in an orgy of making up just in the manner of her fairer sisters in other parts of the world. Never did movie actress require so much making up as an artist's model in these islands. She favoured elaborate, if somewhat bizarre, decorative facial schemes which took a long time to design and work out. There was nothing for it but to let them have their own way, for if this were denied them, they would sulk and be useless. Often I regretted the failure of Kadakavina, who at any rate did her making up in her own time and not in mine.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ON PATROL

I

PATROLS ARE AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT of the duties of a R.M., since it is when on patrol that he surveys the whole of the life of the people under his control. Villages are inspected, dwellings examined, those in a dilapidated condition are demolished, and new huts are ordered to be erected. Sanitation is arranged, and a medical inspection is held, medicine being sometimes administered to every inhabitant of a village. Taxes are collected, disputes adjusted, and the census taken.

The census is of inestimable value in enabling the R.M. to make his survey of village life and to keep a hold upon the inhabitants ; it reflects their movements and, broadly speaking, enables him to know where they are and what they are doing. It is a mechanism which, as it were, takes hold of each native, and never lets him go. However, as the natives invariably attribute death—except in war—to the results either of evil magic or of *puri-puri*, it is almost impossible to ascertain whether or not the death is from natural causes. And even when a native accuses another of poisoning his relatives, it is very difficult to elucidate sufficient evidence for a conviction.

Where there are European plantations, the patrol officer has to investigate the conditions under which the natives are working, inspect their living quarters and the quality and quantity of their rations, and listen to any complaints

from either employer or employee. Should a native desire to lodge a complaint, the R.M. hears him in private, in order that he shall not be tongue-tied for fear of his employer's vengeance.

A planter is " compelled " by Government ordinance to provide his boys with a blanket, a mosquito net, knife, fork, spoon, plate and pannikin ; but he does not always do so. While I was with the R.M. in the Trobriand Islands we tried to surprise one defaulter, but news moves more quickly than the white traveller, and when the boys were paraded for our inspection each had his full kit : but several of these kits were brand-new, and obviously had never been used.

Patrols in the Trobriands, though fatiguing and not without a spice of danger, are not the hazardous enterprises that they are in other divisions of Papua. In the mountainous country of the mainland, in particular, death may come through being caught in the steep ravines when the rains come down, or through being trapped at sundown in the swamps which swarm with crocodiles. There are districts on the mainland where it is only possible to travel three miles in a day, hacking every inch of the way through tangled jungle, snake infested and swarming with noisome insects.

Some of the work achieved by these patrol officers is most remarkable. Accompanied, sometimes, by a party of no more than five native police-boys, they penetrate into the remote fastnesses of the cannibal country and secure the prisoners for whom they were searching, although harassed by native tribes to whom the jungle affords impenetrable cover. Frequently their work necessitates piercing territory hitherto untrodden by white men, where there may be days when food and water are difficult of access and even to sleep is dangerous.

II

I accompanied my friend the R.M. on one of his patrols. We were to travel to Kaibola, a village on the most northerly

PLATE 10.—THE VILLAGE OF KADUKWAYKELA.

An agricultural centre. The inhabitants are also specialists in the manufacture of lime pots, which are usually decorated with poker-work.

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end of the island : a distance of fifteen miles as the crow flies, although it seemed twice that distance before we reached our destination.

We made an imposing procession, for when travelling in Papua complete equipment has to be carried. There were some thirty or forty carriers, arranged in two separate files. They were loaded with tents, camp-beds, stools, deck-chairs, a table, boxes and baskets containing cooking utensils, seed for the native plantation, and above all, the most essential mosquito nets, without which it is impossible to travel ; for although in other climes one may camp under the stars, to do so here would be to court death.

My own immediate body-guard carried my easel, canvases, stool, paint-box, and so on. The infant son of my cook-boy, not to be thought out of it, played at being the big man, strutting at my side, his little brown chest thrown out with the importance of being the carrier of my sketch-book, which he held upon the top of his head with both hands ; and occasionally he would look up to see whether I had noticed the admirable manner in which he was performing his task.

For mile upon mile the long procession followed a sun-baked track, which bent and twisted and doubled back upon itself through what seemed interminable jungle. It was a monotonous journey, although no doubt the R.M. and myself were better off than the perspiring carriers, who quickly lost their order and broke into little straggling groups.

But at last we halted in the cool shade of the village of Kabwaku. While we waited for the line of carriers to re-form, the chief, Moliasi, received us with the usual ceremonial and exchange of presents. He was, to all appearance, a toughened old scoundrel, who might have stepped out of the pages of some adventure story. His wrinkled face and cunning expression were not assuring ; and his costume enhanced the effect, for he wore a bedraggled and discoloured jumper, and the skirt of an old

police uniform, while the top of his old head was swathed in scarlet calico.

Moliasi is not of royal blood, but achieved his position as ruler of the province of Tilataula by sheer force of character and intrigue. He is liberal to those under his domination, though something of a despot; he compels his subjects to work hard, and encourages industry. He is also a warrior. In the old days, wars between the provinces of Tilataula and Kiriwina were frequent, each province being able to muster the men of some twelve to fourteen villages for the fight. These wars were never very sanguinary or of long duration. From such information as I could gather, their tactics were to fight from cover. Their weapons[1] were clubs, swords, spears and shields, which could only be used at very close range, and since each side was waiting for the other to come out into the open, warfare with them must have been neither spectacular nor particularly dangerous, and peace compacts, one would imagine, must have resulted from sheer *ennui*. The Trobrianders detest monotony, and I cannot imagine them sitting about for days waiting to get at each other.

Head-hunting and cannibalism were never practised by the Trobrianders, but defeat, nevertheless, was a very serious matter, for it involved the destruction of the villages of the vanquished, and exile for a year or more. Moliasi kept To'uluwa, the greatest chief in these islands, out of his province for two years. At the end of this period there was a reconciliation, which was attended by a very spectacular ceremony. The peace treaty between these two powerful chiefs was a very important event, and is not an occasion that To'uluwa cares to remember, for he—the highest chief in the Trobriands—had been conquered, and that by one who was not of royal descent. Upon the day of the peace ceremony he, the great, the all-powerful

[1] All their weapons are wooden. I believe clubs with stone heads were occasionally employed, but these were probably imported from other districts. The tips of the spears are tempered by fire.

Guiau, had to go to Moliasi's village to pay homage. The proceedings were opened by To'uluwa rushing into the assembly holding up a valuable arm-shell, and placing it on the ground in front of the victor, at the same time calling out in a loud voice: "Here is reparation, Moliasi." He then retired and returned with another arm-shell; repeating this performance a number of times. One of Moliasi's retinue picked up the gifts, for a Trobriand chief never takes a gift in person; it is always taken up by one of his retinue. To'uluwa, having completed his presentation, then made a dramatic speech to the assembly, in which he explained the cause of his defeat. Then Moliasi made his return gifts, placing them upon the ground in a similar manner, giving the exact equivalent for the arm-shells which he had received. Many speeches were made by both parties, all of them definitely proclaiming To'uluwa as their supreme ruler,[1] and at a later date friend and foe assisted each other in rebuilding the village.

In cases of petty wars between two villages, the party sueing for peace would kill a pig, the entrails were taken out and a large stone tomahawk put inside; the body would then be tied up and taken to the other party, and hostilities would cease.

There were also private vendettas which became hereditary feuds. At any important ceremony or feast, where a number of villages were gathered together, the community of each village would remain within its own circle, eyeing the other groups with suspicion and even open hostility. In pre-Government days no native would think of travelling unarmed.

Moliasi struck me as being a very active and dictatorial man, but he does not possess the grand manner and fine bearing of his old rival To'uluwa. They are still hostile to each other, and even now are disputing over some land.

[1] My informant was unable to explain why, although To'uluwa was vanquished, he was still acknowledged as the supreme chief. One can but assume that it was not a war for suzerainty.

In the olden days this would have culminated in open war, but nowadays the R.M. acts as intermediary.

Every village in Moliasi's district possesses its own petty chief, but their authority is very arbitrary, all the power and influence being vested in the greater chief. Unlike To'uluwa, beyond his own province Moliasi is regarded as a villain. Although he has the interests and welfare of his own people at heart, treating them fairly and with consideration, beyond his own domain he is not over-scrupulous in his dealings, and is for ever intriguing to extend his sphere of power.

In this village I saw a remarkably beautiful child of about two years of age. Although undoubtedly of pure native blood, she possessed delicate features, long curly hair streaked with gold, and well-modelled, fully rounded limbs, which—unlike those of the normal Trobriand infants —were not attenuated. Nor had she the abnormally distended paunch which is such a marked feature with the other native children. The two other children of the same family were also beautiful, but in a less noticeable degree.

In general, I noticed that the girls of inland villages were more sturdily built than those of villages on the coast, and also that they were comparatively shy : which was a relief after seeing the brazen effrontery of the other girls.

As we continued our journey large raindrops splashed about us, then suddenly we were enveloped in an immense sheet of water falling vertical and heavy, beating the clothing to our bodies, while the ground melted under the first rush of the mighty downpour. The carriers appeared like phantoms as they moved through the liquid wall, which seemed to catch fire as the lightning flickered through it ; the unceasing thunder mingled with the loud persistent hiss of the falling rain, which swept all before it, including the remnants of my preconception of this inscrutable country as placid ; but savage is its unhealthy climate, savage its treacherous seas, where there is death in many forms ; savage the jungle, where poisons and decay lurk

under the smiling surface of its lavish verdure, and savage its denizens. The storm passed, and we ploughed our way through soggy, steaming tracks ; the heavy vapour clung about us, while the smell of the hot earth oppressed.

Our entry into Kaibola was received with enthusiasm since this was to be the inauguration of the Government's new plantation scheme previously alluded to. When we reached the rest-house, there was an endless procession of envoys from the chiefs, bearing presents of vegetables and fruit ; and the entire population of numerous villages assembled on the beach, whilst the chiefs and men of rank sat in front of the hut to "make talk," chew betel, and smoke.

To'uluwa was one of the delegates who were petitioning for a removal of the Government ban upon an important tribal custom, but their quest was unsuccessful, and the old chief, realising the futility of pressing his case, withdrew.

Day sank into night, and the silvering mist of the moon, the warm orange and ruby glow of the fires, throwing into relief the wavering groups that squatted round them, emphasised the extreme theatricality of the scene.

III

When the R.M. makes court while on patrol he has to make the best of things and dispense with much of the elaboration to which he is accustomed at home. The court-house is usually the shadiest spot in the village. He sits in a deck-chair, and makes a table by balancing his despatch case on a camp-stool. The inhabitants of the village sit in front of him in a wide semicircle, the men on one side and the women on the other. When the census is taken, the natives come to the R.M. one by one to answer the necessary questions ; but as it is contrary to native etiquette to ask a Trobriander his name, direct, the difficulty is overcome by the R.M. asking the name of the parents.[1]

[1] The person asked is usually whoever may be standing nearest the person of whom it is desired to know the name.

The men appear rather bored with the proceedings. They squat on the ground, watching stoically all that does not immediately concern them. But they know that sooner or later the question of taxes will be raised, and then they will be called upon for information more vitally affecting them.

The girls, on the other hand, are nervous. Some are shy, others hide their confusion with an artificial appearance of boldness, which deceives no one. And then as they retire from the ordeal they are greeted with badinage from their companions. One seems to remember similar excitement at home when the ages of ladies have to be stated on the census paper!

When the census is completed, the men of the village are ranged in one rank, in order of ages, in order that the R.M. may decide which of them are of age to pay the taxes. The proceeding is complicated by the fact that the Trobrianders literally do not know their ages. They do not keep count of their birthdays (perhaps with wisdom under the circumstances), and it is left to the R.M. to decide the point by guesswork.

Then the tax has to be paid: an unpopular item on the programme, and one which results in many defaulters being ordered to await the escort that will take them to jail.

The court then sits to deal with cases of dispute, and afterwards comes the still less popular medical inspection. At the time when I was present it was ordered that every person in the village—men, women, and children—should be treated with a dose of Epsom salts in addition to an obnoxious mixture used as an antidote to ringworm. The children took the mixture quietly, making very little fuss, but the adults coughed and spluttered and spat, and finally sought sugar-cane to remove the taste. On the other hand, the salts they regarded as "good fashion too much," some even asking for a second dose.

Upon the occasion of this patrol, the most important

case was that of a youth who had broken the legs and head of his maternal uncle, an old man, but fortunately the result was not fatal. The accusers were the victim's relatives. The dispute was over some garden-land which, according to Trobriand law, the youth would inherit upon the death of his uncle, but if a nephew desired to acquire the land during his uncle's lifetime the nephew would have to make several substantial payments for it, and the uncle would relinquish the land bit by bit. In the present instance the youth was anxious to buy, but the uncle was unwilling ; a dispute followed, and the youth in a fit of rage attacked the old man and inflicted the serious injuries for which he was now on trial. The defendant was sentenced to six months. The other cases were trivial domestic squabbles, soon adjusted, and a complaint from a native missionary that the elders of the village were influencing the children against attending school.

When a commoner of either sex becomes very old, and his house is in a good condition, he leaves it and goes to finish his days in an old hut. There are small huts with accommodation for one person, especially built for old people, but it does not always signify that the person is almost dying before taking up residence in one of these huts; frequently it may be a question of economy and convenience, as sometimes the old person leaves the larger hut for the greater comfort of both him or herself and the relatives with whom he has been living. Particularly would this be so in the case of a widow or widower; though in some instances I saw these small houses in a wretched condition, and almost falling to pieces. In the case of a chief or other person of rank, he will remain in his own house to die.

The work of the R.M. on patrol as here described may be divided into a number of patrols, which is governed by the size of the villages, the distance they may be from headquarters, or other causes.

CHAPTER NINE

THE TROBRIANDERS' PARADISE

ONE DAY THE R.M. AND MYSELF set out on a patrol of the neighbouring islands of Kaileuna and Tuma, which contained some prospect of adventure, for in Trobriand waters favourable weather conditions are the exception, not the rule.

The whaleboat's complement comprised twelve prisoners, two police-boys, a cook-boy (who also acted as pilot), a female prisoner being returned to her village, the R.M. and myself. The majority of the prisoners were from the jungle who had never handled oar or sail, and possibly some of them had never ventured on the sea. The jungle people are extremely afraid of the sea, although they only live within two miles' distance of it.

With light winds we sailed down the channel into the heavy tide race which is invariably running between Kaileuna and Kiriwina. As we left the lee of the land a sudden blow caught us abeam, the boat shipped water, to the consternation of the amateur sailormen and mirth of their experienced shipmates, who laughed at their discomfiture. We lifted upon an immense comber, our streaming bows pointing heavenward, then dropped into the trough; and force of the impact opened up a seam, and kit and bottom boards floated upon the rapidly rising waters. Rain ran off the matted hair and over the shoulders of the labouring crew as they baled madly to keep the water down. The girl, her drenched body protected by a palm mat, crouched

shivering between the thwarts, staring with panic-stricken eyes as waves leapt over the gunwale and fell inboard, and we wondered how this old boat—already condemned—would stand the severe buffeting from the ugly squalls which rolled down upon us, blotting out the creaming seas which thundered on the reef. With difficulty we concealed our anxiety from the crew, who relied upon the Taubadas to bring them to safety, and the natives' frequent attempts to shelter in the lee made capsizing imminent. The look-out shouted, we lifted upon a tremendous wave, then in a welter of foam we shot through the channel into the lagoon. The storm died away as quickly as it had risen and the now placid lagoon lay sparkling under the sun, a mosaic of magnificent colours which dazzled with their brilliancy. Our sodden kit was laid out to dry, while we examined the damaged boat. The injury was not so extensive as we had anticipated, most of the water having swept over the side ; we were able to make temporary repairs, sufficiently to enable us to continue the patrol.

On Kaileuna, a short distance from the village of Kudawaga, we saw a small cairn, within the irregular cavity of which lay a jumbled heap of human skulls and thigh bones, moss-grown and yellowed : poor bits of things that once were warriors. The bones are believed to be those of chiefs, relics of the days when it was customary to dismember the corpse of a chief and bury the parts in different villages—a practice which, through the influence of the Government and of the missionaries, has now fallen into disuse. There are several of these cairns on Kaileuna, but they are peculiar to that district.

There is a native law that women may not look upon these remains, but even if there were no such rule, fear of evil magic would deter them from going near the places. The people believe that anyone entering one of these sacred spots without pronouncing the correct incantation would inevitably be struck down by the spirits ; and therefore

the cairns have come to be used by evilly-disposed sorcerers, who come there to lay plans for the disposal of their enemies.

Tuma is part of a group of minute atolls. It is only about two miles long by one mile across at its widest part, and contains one small village with a population of some thirty inhabitants. The island, in native mythology, is supposed to be the abiding place of the spirits of the Trobriand dead. Here these spirits, who are called Baloma, pass a happy, untrammelled and rejuvenated existence, living much as they did when they were encased in the common clay, except that in their paradise there are no Bwaga'u (evil sorcerers) or Mulukwausi (flying-witches), and that there is an abundance of women and yams, the two necessities in the Papuan idea of paradise. Once every year, during the dance season (Milamala), the spirits visit their earth-bound relatives, who, ever solicitous for the welfare of their ancestors, erect a special platform for them to sit upon. An offering of food is made to them and for a period the spirits sit upon their lofty platforms and watch the dancing and feasting. Towards the close of the season, the inhabitants of the villages display all their wealth in front of their houses: *vaygu'a* (native valuables) comprising arm-shells, belts and necklaces of pink shell money, stone axe-heads, fishing nets, and a selection from their yam and taro crops. Upon one such occasion in Kavataria village the season had not been bountiful, and, as sometimes happens, a number of the men had pawned their axe-heads to traders: they therefore borrowed *vaygu'a* and tobacco from the traders, being ashamed that the Baloma should discover them in such straitened circumstances.

The spirits then make a tour of the village in order to imbibe the "spirit" of all the good things they see to take back with them to Tuma. Finally a tapping of the drums intimates to them that their hosts consider it time that they returned to their paradise. By the drumming the spirits are driven from village to village, and when they

reach the coast they are unceremoniously chased into the sea, a fusilade of sticks and stones speeding the parting guests.

Upon the occasion that witnessed this ceremony some of the exhibits were very tastefully arranged, particularly those of the chief and men of rank, and the community expressed great pleasure when I made a tour of the village. The drumming continued intermittently all day, but the musicians appeared inexpressibly bored; in fact, apart from the displays of wealth, there was an absence of dignity about the performance.

Sometimes these spirits show themselves to the living, who are quite unafraid of them and would stop to converse with a spirit if they met one. A trader relates that one of his boys, an orphan, came to him one day and said: "Taubada, mother belong me; she come and tell me 'close up I die.'" The boy was in a perfectly healthy condition. He was told not to be a stupid idiot and to get on with his work. The following morning the early cup of tea did not arrive; the trader went to investigate, and found that the boy was dead.

Upon certain occasions there are invocations of the ancestral spirits, when offerings are made to them as part of a ritual. The Baloma exercise a beneficent influence upon the Trobrianders. They inspire the wood-carvers in their work and are instrumental in composing songs and dances; the sorcerers invoke their assistance, the chief appeals to them for guidance when deciding complex problems. During this patrol I heard a girl give her first rendering of a song, which had been inspired on the previous night by the spirits, who appeared to her while she was asleep and taught her the words. There were many verses, which she sang without faltering.

According to native belief, should a Trobriander die while on a Kula expedition in Dobu, for the time being his spirit will dwell on Mount Bwebweso, Normanby Island. In due course the spirits of the Trobrianders would sail

from Tuma upon a spirit Kula, when the lately deceased would join the expedition and return with them to Tuma.

In the spirit-world of Mount Bwebweso the spirit of the Trobriander will find conditions slightly different from those prevailing in Tuma. For example, he will have to pass an examination to gain admittance and he will have only one wife, to whom he must remain faithful. Old women become rejuvenated when they reach this halycon land. Marriage and giving in marriage continue. A widow, though she may have remarried on earth, is at Mount Bwebweso, reunited with her first husband, and the second husband when he arrives has to take one of the women already there who may be without a husband. Children are born and upon arriving at maturity do not age. Fighting and stealing are unknown, and all are united in a common brotherhood. There are degrees of punishment, though the standard of right and wrong is but vaguely defined, if at all. There are two circles in this spirit-world, one the shrine of the elect, and the other an outer circle. The spirit-judges in this mystic world decide who shall be admitted into the inner shrine, for which a special qualification of good conduct is essential; those who do not pass this examination are compelled to remain in the outer circle and watch the more fortunate spirits enjoying the full benefits of the Paradise.

The Trobrianders also possess a belief that when the spirit of a chief desires to revisit its old home it will enter for the purpose into a live snake. Should they see a snake in the dead chief's house all the honours due to a chief would be paid to it, including an offering of wealth. They would implore the snake not to harm them and to go away, for they would not want it to stay, although they would be afraid to harm it for fear of evil befalling them.

Spiritualism also is practised by the Trobrianders. A short while ago a number of the relatives of a man who had recently died assembled on a trader's verandah; an

old man sat in their midst and went into a trance, and the relatives conversed with the dead. The trader was absent and this verandah was considered to offer greater seclusion from interruption than would have been possible in the village.

On Tuma, jutting out almost at right angles to the island, is the shrine of Topileta, the supreme deity of the Trobriand spirit-world. It is a strange place, of grotesque coral formation some fifty feet high, the whole surface of the promontory being broken into sharp needle-points and steep declivities, shelving steep into the sea, where shoals of brilliant small fish flash in the clear depths. These fish are considered to be the guardians of the shrine, and are presumed to be of a species unknown on other parts of the coast. To catch them is strictly tabu, as any breach of the law would bring swift retribution from the spirits.

Though the Trobrianders appear to treat their spirits as very ordinary people, with whom they possess much in common, in a sense their spirit-world is a much more real and clearly defined place to them than heaven is to the orthodox Christian. When they die, their souls will drift across to Tuma and enjoy a life identical with that which they left on earth, minus the evils and dangers which beset them as mortals. They will grieve a little at their compulsory separation from their relatives upon the earth, but they will know that in duè season these will join them. In the meantime the spirits will seek solace in their harems and in much feasting. When I asked one of my boys what he would do when he went to Tuma, he naïvely replied: "Oh, Taubada, plenty yams, plenty women 'e stop Tuma."

Unlike the Dobua paradise, no special qualifications are necessary to enjoy the full privileges of Tuma. Nor does their status alter; a chief retains his earthly rank, though a commoner acquires a more felicitous condition. Whereas upon earth, in adherence to native law and custom, he could only possess one wife and a limited supply of yams,

in his spiritual existence he will have an abundance of both. Since to be admitted into the Trobriand heaven necessitates no standard of good conduct, it therefore possesses no moral stimulus as a power for law and order; nevertheless, sorcerers and witches do not exist in the spirit-world, so it may be assumed that the souls of these evil people remain for ever earthbound; or one might suppose that, since sorcery and witchcraft are hereditary, they transmit their evil powers to their relatives before their beatified souls depart for Tuma.

It may be said that the Trobrianders cannot differentiate between good and evil, as we understand these things; but treating this subject in its broader sense, the salient fact remains that their conception of a heaven is a place where evil is not, and happiness is the ruling factor—a happiness, moreover, which it not selfish, as witness the presumed grief of the spirits that their relatives cannot, in the immediate present, join them in the happy land. The Trobrianders worship no gods, but in times of stress and danger they endeavour to overcome their difficulties by the performance of rites and the incantation of spells, by which it is hoped to nullify the effects of the evil magic to which they attribute their distress. Many of these spells are excessively involved and are founded upon ancient myths.

CHAPTER TEN

DEATH CUSTOMS

THE PASSING OF A GREAT CHIEF

I

WHILE I WAS IN THE TROBRIANDS an important chief named Wanoi died. With him, a line of great chiefs became extinct. He was closely related to To'uluwa, the supreme monarch of the Trobriands, and consequently his death was an event of great tribal importance. Since he had wielded considerable influence and power over his district, his passing meant a further disintegration of tribal life.

At his funeral ceremony I saw much that was of interest, the ordinary celebrations being supplemented by special rites because he was leaving no successor: his yam store, for instance, was to be allowed to drop into decay and his fine ocean-going canoe was to be destroyed.

The ceremony embraced the entire village. Dismal sounds of lamentation drifted through the sultry air, rising and dying away, and coming again on the variable breeze. The dreary throbbing of a drum and mournful wailing on a conch shell came as a sound of misery and desolation.

The house of mourning faced the heat-drenched Baku, the central ground of the village. Seated on the left of the Baku were a great number of sobbing women and children. Upon the right were the men, weeping tempestuously, tears pouring down their cheeks. From the tracks which led into the village, processions of mourners, walking in

single file, marched in from outlying villages, one man in each procession carrying a pole that was to form part of the bier.

The men went straight to the dead chief's hut, and with bowed heads remained standing outside the door. The women in the processions stood swaying from side to side, placing their arms upon the shoulders of the five principal women mourners: his oldest widow and four others who had been his wives. These five stood in a row, with their backs to the hut: they carried the chief's lime gourd, his basket, his palm mat and others of his belongings. The eldest widow stood a little in advance of the other four holding in each hand a bunch of cassowary plumes which had been used by the dead man in the dances. As each train of visitors arrived, these five women moved in a slow halting dance, with each step lifting a foot about eight inches from the ground.

As each procession reached the hut, its members stood aside, while the principal mourners, continuing their weird dance, moved forward to meet the next train of visitors and then walked round the hut, wailing lugubriously.

When all the visitors were assembled, the widows seated themselves on the platform outside the hut. A young girl, wearing the shaven head and blackened body that signifies the deepest mourning, came forward, knelt on the ground and moved on her knees towards the eldest widow, kissing her hand and remaining for a few moments with her head in the woman's lap.

Within the depths of the chief's hut strange shapes moved eerily. Apprehensive lest some gruesome ceremonial might be in progress, I peered in, but the glare of the sun prevented me from seeing clearly; I could but vaguely discern a row of women seated upon either side, and at the far end a woman who was beating the dirge and blowing dolorously on a conch shell, a strange figure looking as though cut out of black cardboard.

I was bidden to enter the hut. Still dazzled by the strong light, I could not perceive the body, but only a head-dress of cockatoo plumes that waggled curiously upon a woman's lap. Suddenly I discovered that I was standing close to the corpse. Seeing me, the mourners ceased their wailings to ask me for a present of tobacco : a peculiarly callous interruption, as it seemed to me. I gave them what they wanted, and the lamentations recommenced, as lugubriously as before.

The chief's body was decorated with all the panoply that had been his during life : upon his head was the head-dress of cockatoo plumes which he used in the dancing seasons ; his lips were painted scarlet with betel juice, his waist encircled with belts of pink shell money, his legs encompassed with circlets of cowrie shells, while upon his arms were the much-prized arm-shells.[1]

The body lay horizontally upon the laps of four women, who rocked it while they wailed ; one of the women holding the jaws closed. I made a mortuary gift of tobacco which, in adherence to custom, I placed upon the dead man's chest, in order that he could convey the spirit of the tobacco to Topileta, the keeper of the nether world, to secure for himself greater social prestige in Tuma. The ladies requested me to be seated, but the crowded condition of the diminutive hut and the oppressive, nauseating odours of the stifling atmosphere became overpowering, and I hastily withdrew. Whilst the mortuary feast was being prepared, three men entered the Baku, and delivered an oration, the purport of the speech being that Wanoi was a great and good chief,

[1] The custom of overlaying the dying or dead man with articles of native wealth (*vaygu'a*) is founded on several beliefs, one being that the deceased should take the spirit of these things to Tuma to procure him a high social position there. The *vaygu'a* is also intended to make the last moments of the dying man happier, to comfort him with the memory of his achievements, rank and social renown, for the *vaygu'a* are valued in quite a different manner from that in which we value our wealth. The widow's brothers give a *vaygu'a* to the brothers of the dead man, but it is returned the same day, after being kept just long enough to give consolation to the bereaved : for the Trobrianders derive pleasure even from just handling the *vaygu'a*.

that he wished to be buried in the village that he loved so well, but that the mandate had been issued by the all-powerful and supreme chief To'uluwa that Wanoi must be interred in Omarakana, the Trobrianders' place of sepulture for their great chiefs. With arresting gestures and flourishing of weapons, their deep sonorous voices ringing through the village, the orators continued : " We do not wish it thus, but To'uluwa has so ordained, and his command must be obeyed. Listen, you who are the great Taubada, to that which we say ; henceforth this village is no more ! We will destroy the huts, remove our gardens, and sell out coco-palms to the white man ! Oh, woe is to us, oh woe ! woe ! " [1]

They had worked themselves up into a frenzy, and, flourishing their weapons, they made a very dramatic exit. In pre-Government days this incident would probably have culminated in open warfare with To'uluwa's faction.

The food for the feast was piled in conical heaps, placed in two rows ; it consisted of baked taitu, three coco-nuts and uncooked pigs' flesh. The feast prepared, two men of rank walked up to each pile, calling out the names of the participants, who came forward and collected their cairn of food. One pile was brought to me by a most commanding personality, dignified and courteous. This naked savage with high forehead and Hebraic countenance suggested to my mind that, given a white skin and European clothes, he would have passed for an aristocrat. The mound of food did not look particularly inviting ; however, as an acknowledgment of the courtesy, I partook of the taitu, which proved to be most toothsome. I indicated that the remainder of my share of the feast could be distributed. My distinguished-looking host remarked : " No, Taubada, keep one of the coco-nuts ; you will require a drink when you have finished eating "—in which he was correct. I wanted

[1] They did not put their threat into execution ; the village of Olivileli still remains, continuing a well-ordered though less important existence.

that coco-nut milk badly : taitu is palatable but decidedly dry.

The feasting over, the natives simultaneously recommenced their wailing. It was an amazing spectacle to see this vast crowd of normally cheerful people suddenly burst into tears and lamentations. Whilst some constructed the bier with the poles which had been brought from the other villages, numbers of the men gathered round the chief's hut, digging at the side where it was presumed the chief had buried a much-valued stone axe head. A stone axe was found but not the one for which they were searching. However, this was removed from the hole and a coco-nut planted on the spot. The crowd surged round the hut to an aperture which had been cut at the end opposite the door, where the bier was placed. It was covered with palm mats, a larger mat being held over the bier and up to the door, in order that the dead man should not be exposed to the light. The body, now divested of the regalia, was brought out head foremost, the bearers breaking through the end wall of the hut, which cracked and splintered, filling the air with clouds of choking dust, the bearers' exertions causing the corpse to shake grotesquely as though silently protesting against the unseemly haste. The perspiring crowd pressed forward as the cortège appeared, scarcely giving the bearers room, as with lightning speed they bound up the body in palm mats. The bier was lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers and Wanoi commenced his last long journey to the land of his gods.

The procession wound through the village, a long train of brown figures splashed with gold where the scattered sunlight fell upon it. Upon the edge of the village a few old cronies, too decrepit to follow the cortège, crouched upon the ground, the strident notes of their monotonous death-song subsiding into a low moaning that mingled with the prattle of children at play and the plaintive call of a pigeon —sounds that echoed through the deserted Baku, where

remnants of the feast, leaves and coco-nut husks lay shrivelling on the parched ground.

. . . . . .

News spread through the island that I had made an illustration of Wanoi's funeral, and for the following month I was inundated with visitors from the remotest villages, requesting to see the work. They would spend a considerable time looking at it, carefully studying the details and naming the people depicted.

II

Disease and death other than by violence are attributed to magic, and the Trobrianders possess a well-defined set of superstitions on the subject. Malignant diseases are attributed to the flying-witches, who are thought to be invisible and, when searching for their victims, to perch on trees and in other inaccessible places. Epidemic diseases are imputed to powerful spirits, who, invisible, go through the village, touching their victims, so that they immediately sicken and die. These evil spirits are alleged to come from the d'Entrecasteaux Islands, and their supernatural powers are supposed to be impervious to the counter-magic of the Trobriand sorcerers. Natural death resulting from old age is considered possible, but the Trobrianders are invariably suspicious that such death is indirectly the result of evil magic. Suicide is comparatively frequent, the usual method being to climb a tall palm and drop down head foremost. In many instances the desire for suicide arises from quite trivial causes, and the relatives frequently endeavour to frustrate attempts.

A commoner is buried with the arms crossed upon the chest, the body being bound up in three pieces of palm mat. Sorcerers are buried face downwards, the belief being that, should they endeavour to get out of the grave, they would dig downwards, thus burying themselves deeper.

When a chief dies his body is sometimes cut up and distributed among his relatives, the last honour they can pay him being to bury him in several graves in different villages, the small bones of his body being made into lime spatulas, which are held sacred to his memory. The bones of relatives are worn upon a cord hung round the neck, and are also regarded as sacred relics.

As a token of mourning the whole of the body is blackened with charcoal and the head is shaven—a very disfiguring practice. One day a girl came to my boy-house. She was a robust, winsome maiden, with rich golden-brown hair, and beautifully gowned in a most elaborate skirt. When she made her exit she was unrecognisable ; a shaven head, her body blackened from head to foot, and a drab skirt, gave her an aged appearance that was almost repulsive.

When " mourning " for a distant relative, only a portion of the body is blackened. A widow wears a long skirt almost touching the ground and strings of black seeds tied crosswise over her body. The immediate blood-relatives do not go into mourning, but they arrange the period for which the widow or widower, as the case may be, shall remain in mourning. Should the relatives of the deceased bear a grudge against the relict, he or she might be compelled to remain in mourning for perhaps eighteen months ; if, however, the relative is in favour, the period of mourning might be limited to three months. There are also professional mourners who, if they are not paid when their duties are completed, will remain in their mourning until the debt has been paid. The grave-diggers are also remunerated for their services.

When a chief or one of his blood-relations dies shortly before the dance season, no dancing is permitted in the deceased's village, but the community may participate in dances in other villages.

When a commoner dies, the relatives forgather in the hut of the deceased until the funeral, which is generally

within one or two days after death. The chief mourner intones a litany, which the others take up. It commences in a very low tone, a long-drawn-out wail, and terminates almost with a shout. These melancholy sounds are reiterated throughout the day and most of the night. At sundown on the day of the funeral a mortuary feast is held. For the first few nights immediately following a death the widow or widower repeats these doleful lamentations until a very late hour, and then at extended intervals until the period of mourning terminates.

A curious custom prevails that when anyone dies all the members of the family change their name, the new name being generally chosen to remind them of something connected with the cause of the death ; they take the name of his disease or a word meaning that he was killed in a fight. At Dobu the name of a dead man must not be mentioned within the hearing of his friends. If the deceased bore the name of a tree, etc., some other name would be substituted for it, and if some living man bore the same name as the deceased he would change his name. When a girl dies it is tabu to enter her village in anything but the plainest attire, lest the relatives should be reminded of the way she used to dress.

A Trobriand grave is ordinarily a rectangular mound of dead coral, with a croton bush planted at each end ; the grave of a man of rank has a canopy of palm matting erected over it. Yaluta, a blood-relative of Wanoi, had a very elaborate grave : a large number of curved staves were stuck vertically in the ground in the form of an ellipse, each one of them surmounted with a feather from the dead man's head-dress, while above them a canopy of palm was erected and festooned with flowers ; there was no mound to the grave and the customary coral stones were not used. This grave was not situated in the common burial-ground, but set apart in a small clearing under some palms, the space being floored with white coral sand and kept very neatly.

The village burial-ground is usually situated some few hundred yards from the village.

In a clearing by the wayside I saw, strewn with vine-tangled shrubs and deeply overshadowed, a number of sad little mounds ; tumbled rectangular heaps of dead coral, showing blue-grey through the weeds. A thin spiral of purple smoke curled up from a fire round which five children were seated. Stretched across the newly turned earth of a grave lay a woman, her whole frame shaking with the paroxysm of her grief. The children sat like graven images wide-eyed, uncomprehending, as the grief-stricken mother dug her fingers into the soft earth, calling upon the spirits to give her back her child.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PEARLS

I

After a while I left the shelter of the R.M. and went to stay with a white trader. By doing so I lost the sense of authority conferred upon me by the natives as one connected with the Government; but I gained a greater insight into the life of the villages. Moreover, I had conceived the idea of building a studio for myself, and the friendly trader had kindly lent me a site for the purpose and offered his invaluable advice and assistance with the building.

One might naturally suppose that in the wilds one could acquire a piece of land without difficulty; but that is not so in the Trobriands, where every bit of land, every tree and every stone, has its owner. These owners, moreover, are autocratic, and they have complicated land laws based upon the custom of handing down property from generation to generation. Assuming that they are willing to sell, and there are coco-nut palms on the site, although I may have purchased the land, if the owner of the palms is not willing to negotiate, there they remain and are tabu to me. Then again, perhaps one of the partners might not be disposed to sell his share of the property; there is another delay of a few more weeks, which to them is of no moment but to me important; therefore, on the whole, I was particularly grateful to the trader for coming to my assistance.

I knew that when I set up house for myself I should, above everything else, need a cook-boy. I began the search

for one as soon as I left the R.M.'s house, but for long I was unsuccessful. The boys were all working in their gardens at that season, and for six weeks not even the lure of the Taubada's tobacco would overcome the fear of the wrath of chiefs and elders if they deserted their posts. I was compelled to leave the matter for the time being. How my problem was unexpectedly solved will be related in due course.

II

In this world of palms the building of a house is a very different matter from that to which we are accustomed at home. Every man must be his own architect and his own overseer. And nearly all the materials have to be wrested from the jungle.

The mainstay of the structure is a rectangular platform built on short piles, bounded by uprights of undressed timber and surmounted by a roof which is constructed partly of sago thatch and partly of shingles, with a few sheets of corrugated iron. An iron gutter runs along the edge of the gable and is connected with a spout to a circular tank : for each house must collect its own water supply. In times of drought, water can be brought from the village water-holes, which are probably a mile or more away, but this water possesses a curious flavour and lacks whatever quality it is that brings soap into a lather. The gutter and tank are therefore among the most essential parts of a house.

Indoors, the floor-space, covered with split palm-bark, is divided into as many sections as immediate needs demand, by walls of pandanus leaf lashed to uprights of rough sticks. There may be bedroom, bathroom and living room : the kitchen is a separate building connected with the house by a narrow platform. If, at a later date, further rooms are required, the house is enlarged, the additional accommodation sprawling out in irregular lines from the sides and back of the building.

Glazed windows are uncommon : if the man who builds

his house is fortunate enough to possess a sheet of glass, he makes a hole in a wall of exactly the right size to fit the glass, and is inordinately proud of his accomplishment; if he has no glass, he makes a flap of packing-case wood and calls it a shutter.

Adjoining his house, the trader builds a store with a verandah on which he can interview his clients. The store is constructed much on the principle of a London coffee-stall, the flap opening up against the roof of the verandah. Within, its walls are lined with shelves and partitions in which rest a confusion of his wares: trade cutlery in white cardboard boxes, bottles of scent, combinations of tin-opener and corkscrew, mirrors in crude wooden frames, tins of biscuits, mouth organs, jews' harps, tins of meat, tobacco and wax vestas. On an upper shelf will lie cheap enamel ware of a crude and sickly blue and white, lamp glasses and bottles full of beads; while necklaces of pink shell money, strings of beads, arm-shells and other trinkets much valued by the Trobrianders hang from the edges of the shelves. Gaudy calicoes—red, blue and yellow with elaborate patterns—hang from strings across the room; belts, tomahawks, knives, obscene wooden images, cedar-wood chests, and bundles of newspapers (used by the natives for making cigarettes) will lie about the floor, amid cases of trade tobacco and baskets of betel nuts.

But of all these things, the one most important in bartering with the natives is the pink shell money, or *sapi sapi*, as it is called. This is regarded as invaluable by the inhabitants throughout the length and breadth of Papua, and its acquisition is a leading native industry. The white traders encourage the industry: they have made themselves the centre of it. For to get the *sapi sapi* which is so highly valued by them the natives will barter something which they do not value but which is most highly prized by the white men—pearls.

The insignificant-looking stores are daily the scene of

PLATE 11.—A PEARLING STATION AND COCO-NUT PLANTATION, KARIBI

To face p. 122.

traffic in pearls of enormous value. It is amazing to a stranger to see the casual manner in which these priceless gems are bartered. The trader, dressed in a ragged singlet and much-patched dungarees, is occupied upon some job, perhaps, connected with his house: the rain, it may be, has been coming through the roof and he has to turn carpenter to repair the damage. A native wanders up and stands watching. The trader, having struck a particularly hard knot in the timber, curses loudly against all and sundry and particularly against the boy, who is the only human being within earshot. The boy is quite unperturbed and waits calmly until the trader is ready to attend to him. At last the time comes. "What matter got 'im *waituna*?" (pearl), asks the trader. "Yes, Taubada, good fellow too much," replies the boy, with nonchalance. The trader continues his sawing—although the pearl might be of immense value. There is another interval. The boy unwinds the gem from a piece of dirty calico. The trader casually glances at it, remarks "All right, *igau*" (by and by), and continues his work, while the boy dawdles off to the verandah, there to wait for an hour or two. The trader, having completed the work in hand, expectorates, gives a hitch to his pants, slouches over to the store and opens up the shutter, when the waiting native and his friends buzz round, peering in at the wealth of tobacco and dazzling "trade." The light is blocked out with brown heads, with rolling eyes searching out the darkest corners of this wonderland of Dim Dim products. Anxiously the boys hand in their pearls. After a little haggling the amount of barter is settled and the pearls are slipped into an empty quinine bottle in which are others of their kind, whose value may possibly be some five thousand pounds or more; this bottle of wealth is casually stuck back on the shelf and the fortunate winners come in to choose their "trade." They gaze about them like children with a penny to spend, wondering what they shall buy with it.

The selection made, they trundle out, clutching their gee-gaws and tuning up on the newly acquired jews' harps and mouth organs. The store is locked up, a padlock being thrust through a crazy staple from which it could be wrenched off with the fingers, and the trader slouches back to his job, while the boys remain on the verandah to discuss the beauties to the trade articles which they have acquired and particularly to rejoice in their new belts of *sapi sapi*.

This *sapi sapi* is the inner layer of a bivalve (Kaloma), chiefly found along the coast of Rossel Island and at Sanaroa, an island in the d'Entrecasteaux group. There is a little of it in the Trobriand lagoon, but that from Sanaroa is regarded as of better quality, besides being more easily accessible.

The Trobrianders go to Sanaroa for Kaloma, to supplement the supplies that they can buy from the traders. They bring back the shells and assemble on the verandah of one of the traders for the operation known as " breaking." The " breaker " is invariably an old man of considerable experience in the industry, it being his work to see that the shells are broken correctly and to the required size. A green stone imported from Woodlark Island (Murua) is used for the breaking, although occasionally a trader takes the place of the native " breaker " and does the work with a pair of metal clippers. The broken pieces of shell are roughly rounded and are then rubbed on flat sandstone until the outside layer is removed and they appear as polished red stones, with flat sides. With a pump drill holes are drilled in the middle and the pieces are threaded on to a thin cane and the shell is rubbed round and round until its form becomes circular. This polishing, as a rule, is done by women. The coins completed, they are sewn into belts and the poorer qualities made into necklaces and ear-rings.

These stones, as I have said, the native regards as real wealth. Pearls, on the other hand, have only recently begun to interest him, and that only at the instance of the

white man. Nowadays there are natives who have acquired some knowledge of the value of a pearl, being able within limits to tell a good pearl from a bad one.

III

There are, of course, traders and traders. Some are hard-working, alert men, who play the game with their fellows. Others are outcasts, with a more or less unrepeatable history; they are men who have cut themselves adrift from all bondage and float on their own wild will, swayed only by the ever-undulating impulses of their own natures, living in filth and degradation, the savages by their contact with them becoming themselves debased. These outcast whites, possessing neither creed nor colour, give to their native followers with a munificence that demoralises. In course of time, climate and hard living leave their mark: a bitter and irreparable regret seizes them—even in the midst of the incomparable splendour of Nature; some perish by their own hand, others from poison through intriguing with the natives.

Some know their job, others buy whatever is offered to them, in the vague hope that in their ignorance they may light upon something of value, and these primeval savages of the untamed wilds, laugh, snigger, and profit hugely, amazed at these mad Taubadas, who war, wrangle and intrigue over a few trumpery seeds.

The pearling season lasts from November to March. Outside of that period the traders live in a state of amity towards one another. But when pearling is afoot, intrigue is rife. The traders eye each other with suspicion. Each suspects the other of a secret understanding with the natives, of "undercutting," and so on. When news comes of a find of pearls, the traders send their boys to "make walk abouts" in the villages in order to discover which of the natives is in possession of the pearls. They employ

spies and "pickets" against their neighbours, and spread elaborate tales of power and influence to induce the natives to come to them rather than to the man next door.

From time to time the traders themselves organise pearling expeditions. Diving for pearls is, of course, perilous work. The pearl oyster belongs to a different family from the species that appears on the dinner-table. In the Trobriands it is a small oyster, lying in patches on the floor of the lagoon at a depth of two or three fathoms; but there is also the gold-lip oyster, which contains larger pearls and lies in much deeper water. The small oysters are comparatively easy to get, but the larger ones involve the risk of encounters with marine creatures of which the shark is amongst the least terrible. The enormous rock cod is much to be feared. But worst of all is the giant clam, a tremendous shellfish sometimes measuring 8 ft. by 4 ft. and weighing possibly half a ton. The edges of the clam shells are as sharp as razors. They rest on the bed of a reef, almost invisible except for a dark snaky line marking the fluted lips that stand ready to snap at the incautious foot that treads upon them. One can battle with other monsters, but there is no escape from the grip of this terrible thing, short of hacking off the captured limb; and even then the scent of blood would bring sharks in hundreds to take what the clam had left.

I recollect the case of a boy whose foot was caught by a small clam lying on a shallow reef. As the native's head was well above the water, the danger was lessened, but every effort to release the foot failed until the clam was chipped off its rock, both boy and clam were carried to the beach, and the heat of a fire induced the clam to slacken its grip.

The natives are fond of the glutinous meat of the clam. To secure it they have to sever the tendons with which the clam makes its grip—a difficult and indeed a dangerous operation; but once the tendons are cut, the clam is powerless and the meat can be secured without further trouble.

It was my good fortune to take part in one of the pearling expeditions. A fleet of fifty or more canoes set out : some mere cockle-shells with but two men aboard, others with crews of eight or ten. Magic had been performed over the canoes to ensure a rich haul, and amongst the excited crews speculation was rife as to whether the *puri-puri* would be potent enough to make the waters of the lagoon reveal their secret treasure.

The natives, no doubt, were imagining themselves suddenly enriched with whole shipments of the tobacco that they could buy after a successful expedition ; but meanwhile a stick of tobacco in the hand was not to be despised, and the canoes went first to the side of the traders' schooner to receive the *bau bau*, or tobacco for a preliminary smoke. Brown hands clutched the rail to steady their bobbing canoes as they stood up to receive it. Then the canoes separated, each crew choosing its own part of the " patch." The boys rubbed themselves with leaves over which magic had been performed, adjusted their swimming-glasses, slung *gubas* (oyster nets) over their arms, and dived.

Three, four or five minutes passed without a sign above the surface of the water. Then appeared a stream of bubbles, and the boys began to rise to the surface, shaking the glistening water from their hair as they clung to the sides of their canoes, while they emptied their nets. Then they dived once more, leaving the boys who had remained in the canoes to prise open the oysters and throw away the shells.

Some of the divers, of course, were unlucky : they struck bad spots in the patch where there was nothing to collect. When a particularly good find was made a piece of calico was flown from the canoe.

The trader, in his schooner, went up to it, his chest of " trade " ready at his side. Sometimes a native would hand up a pearl which the trader would see was *baroque*, the valueless seed pearl. Then the trader would curse, objurgating his immediate surroundings with blasphemous lips,

spit over the side, sling the crew a stick of tobacco and tell them to keep the —— "rubbish" for one of his rivals.

Suddenly we saw a commotion near the shore. A shark has caught one of the boys by the arm, the teeth gashing his flesh. But the boy is wise. He knows that he cannot escape by force, so he thrusts his wounded arm still farther down the monster's throat, compelling it to open for a second : a single second, but enough for the boy to get free ; and then he caught his aggressor's tail and tried to pull it towards the canoe which had been hurried to his rescue !

That expedition, on the whole, was successful. There were casualties, of course, but as I have already said, the Trobrianders make light of their wounds and recover with remarkable rapidity. And pearls had been found, including one almost priceless jem that will one day adorn the throat of a Mayfair hostess or perhaps become the centre of one of the great robberies of the year. But the trader betrayed no emotion at the sight of it. He calmly rolled a cigarette and lit it before he took the jewel from the diver who had found it. The boys jostled each other as they clambered aboard to collect their "trade," then with joyous shouts tumbled into their canoe and dropped astern, some of them playing on their newly acquired tin whistles and mouth organs—a hideous discord, but it punctuated their happiness and made them the envy of the fleet.

For the traders there are fat times and lean : years when they will clear some £10,000, and years when the lagoon is ungenerous and they will make practically nothing. Necessarily they are philosophical over whatever fortune they have. The good comes with the bad. One trader cleared £30,000 in a few seasons, but he knew that in the following years he might earn almost nothing at all, or he might earn a further £30,000. Another trader told me that in twenty years his average taking had amounted to £1,000 per annum.

And there are expenses. Apart from what is paid in the

process of bartering, much is spent in bribery, the payment of spies, and the attempt to lure natives from other traders. The trader has to keep an open hand in the matter of gifts, and even then a boy who has taken his sticks of tobacco for a year may suddenly take it into his head to seek another buyer for his pearls. "Graft" is not a prosperous business in these parts, at any rate from the point of view of the payer.

Another disadvantage of the pearling trade is that to a certain extent it is affected by climatic conditions: for in times of drought the natives, unable to raise their crops, fall back on oysters as a food. They bake them over an open fire, cracking the pearls in the process. Moreover, when at such times the natives take oysters for themselves, they do so without discrimination, often ruining valuable beds by their carelessness.

Each March the buyers arrive: representatives of prominent jewellers from all parts of the world. They come right up to the Trobriands, there to pit their astute wits against the palpable stratagems of these big fisted, lantern jawed, men of the wilds; fighting the contest for the "parcel" of pearls in the tumbled stores of the traders. But even for them the element of chance is present. Chance always is prominent in the pearl trade. The buyers may hear at Samarai that there is every prospect of a good season in the Trobriands, but the good season may never mature, and the uncomfortable, if not dangerous, voyage to the islands will be wasted. From the moment that man begins to rob Nature of these well-guarded treasures, romance, sin, sorrow, and sometimes death, follow in the wake of these precious tears. Thus, from the depths of distant oceans the pearls drift to the great metropoli, where from their silent world they meet the crash of civilisation; the deep rumbling of the surf on coral reefs is supplanted by the deeper rumbling in the city streets, and the dainty maids of fashion gaze upon the lustrous gems, marking their beauty, unconscious of the greater splendour of the coral seas that gave them birth.

CHAPTER TWELVE

BUILDING A STUDIO

THE PROBABILITY OF MY DISCOVERING a cook-boy in the Trobriands became increasingly doubtful, and at last it appeared that I should be compelled to make a voyage back to Samarai on the remote chance that one could be found there who would be willing to accompany me to the Islands.

But one day, during one of my excursions, a boy suddenly materialised on the track in front of me, as though he had sprung out of a trap-door. To this day, I have no idea how he came there. Nor did he give me any opportunity to make inquiries. Without preamble, he began to tell me of his exceptional qualifications, only stopping the record of his unquestionable superiority over all other boys in the whole of the Trobriands when compelled to do so from sheer lack of breath.

I was so delighted at finding an applicant for the post that I did not question what he said. I rushed him off to the R.M.'s office before he had time to recant or to consult his wife on the subject—which would probably have come to the same thing. I paid his first year's wages to the R.M. and signed the necessary forms. The boy touched with his fingers the pencil which the R.M. held out to him (this being the Papuan method of signing a contract with a white man), he was medically examined, and I found myself at last the proud master of a cook-boy.

Feeling like a child in possession of a new toy, I ostenta-

PLATE 12.—THE STUDIO.

Pandanus leaf roof; the walls are of split palm bark covered with an outer layer of woven coco-nut-palm leaves. The stones at the base are coral.

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tiously paraded him before my host. He laughed. I had, he told me, picked up the greatest rogue in all Papua, whose efficiency as a cook-boy was only rivalled by his rascality!

Still, the contract was signed and I felt that even a bad cook-boy was better than no cook-boy at all. And as Dobu had not yet had time to show me his prowess, I hardly believed, then, all that the trader told me about him. Later I was to make discoveries.

By that time the gardens were finished, and soon I was able to collect a whole team of boys for the work I had in mind, the building of my studio. In the first case we had to procure the timber. I felt that I must impress my twelve boys, and accordingly I discarded the tattered singlet and shorts, which had previously seemed good attire enough, and donned a new shirt, riding-breeches and highly polished leggings and boots. Thus clothed, I started on the first day's work of cutting timber.

The timber, it appeared, had to be collected in a mangrove swamp: a grim, evil-looking place, not unlike that from which I had fetched the body of the dead trader some months before when acting as locum-tenens for the R.M. We came to it by canoe, up a narrow channel that wound between high mud-banks. Small black crabs, filthy, repulsive things, looked at us as we passed, or buried themselves out of sight in the mud until we had gone. At one place a crocodile slipped into the water from a steaming mud-bank, showed its snout and wicked eyes for a second above the surface and then sank with scarcely a ripple into the noisome stream. Overhead flew parrots, the only visible piece of bright colour in that green twilight; their startled screeches echoed and re-echoed in the solitude, while from somewhere in the distance came the peculiar call of a Torres Strait pigeon. It was an uncanny experience, which seemed to depress even the native boys.

I was keeping a sharp look-out, with my amateur eyes, for likely timber, and when I saw something that seemed

suitable I called upon the boys to stop. "More better we no stop, Taubada," came the reply. "Plenty too much alligator[1] 'e stop." And they were right. I had certainly not chosen a good place for landing. Crocodiles lurked in black places under the water and on mud-patches, scarcely distinguishable from rotting tree-trunks in the water—until an unwary foot were to touch them.

At last we reached a place where the boys agreed that we could go ashore and where timber might be found. But it was not an ideal landing-place. Contorted roots showed above the slime, but they were the only foothold. Still, it was my own expedition, and I meant to lead it. Dobu objected. "More better you wait, Taubada," he said; but I had no intention of sitting quietly in the canoe (among the crocodiles) while the boys went off by themselves. I meant to impress my retinue that I was the complete backwoodsman. So I stepped ashore, daintily, however, lest my boots and leggings should be besmirched with the slime.

But my first step landed me up to my knees in the mire. Efforts to extricate myself only caused me to sink farther. For a second I clutched at air, then I slithered and fell into a tangle of decayed roots and abominable filth.

My dignity went. I wiped the slime from my face and arms, dragged out my feet, struggled to obtain a foothold on some firmer roots, and eventually decided that an attempt to keep even moderately clean was utterly futile. I kept to the roots where I could and sank into the mud where I must.

At last, after a long search, I found what I took to be a suitable piece of timber and set the boys to work. Crimson sap flowed like blood as the axes bit into the mangrove and turned the mud a dirty, ugly red. I clambered with difficulty on to a perch that would keep me safe from the tree when it fell, and there I stood, waving my arms to keep away the myriad insects which settled on me literally in

[1] Invariably so called in pidgin-English.

clouds. And when at length the trunk of the mangrove was cut through, the tree swayed uncertainly for a moment, fell forward, caught in the upper branches of its neighbour—and remained immovable. None of our efforts would shift it, and it, our first tree, had to be abandoned.

Then, while we went in search of easier trees, the rain came, saturating me in a minute, and all the time in the steaming atmosphere I was drenched as much with perspiration from within as with the rain from without.

I seemed to spend the whole day scrambling over those terrible roots, with interludes of sliding into unsavoury mud. In the end I managed to cut one log, small but very heavy. That, with great labour, we manœuvred across the swamp to the canoe—our entire spoil of a day. And then, at the last moment, it slipped from our grasp, fell into the mud at the water's edge and sank.

That was the disheartening beginning of my search for the timber that was to make the beautiful studio that I had so happily planned. There followed other days, often equally futile, sometimes moderately successful. But it was weeks before we had collected enough wood to enable us to start the work of building.

Then fresh difficulties beset me. There were difficulties with the native workmen. The handling of labour is a problem all the world over, East as well as West. By nature, the Papuan is industrious; but he is no good in a team. Working upon the plantations is having the same effect upon the Papuan as the factory system has had upon the European: the craftsmen are dying out and men take less interest in their work. The plantations are lowering the physique of the Papuan, and, with the loss of his freedom, he is losing his self-reliance. He is now living by routine, separated from his domestic life and his family, and in some cases estranged altogether by force of circumstances from women. The tribal laws and customs tend to heighten the individual standard: under civilised conditions the

Papuan is becoming reduced to the pauperised and unsatisfactory condition of life which has had so evil an effect upon workers in Europe. The Administration very wisely prohibits a boy from being signed on for a longer period than three years, but even this is too long a separation from the advantages of tribal life. One trader, Mr. Charles Lumley, with considerable insight has realised the advantage —indeed the necessity—of providing each of his married boys with a hut and some garden-land, thereby giving them an interest in life and enabling them to retain, in part at least, their normal conditions. But unfortunately in the plantations, where the need is greatest, the plan is considered impracticable.

I was acutely conscious of my ignorance of building construction, and unfortunately I was unable to hide my incompetence from my boys. It was, I fear, easy to deceive so inexperienced a master. The boys realised that the slower they worked, the longer the job would take and consequently the more pay they would receive. Naturally, therefore, the days dragged into weeks, and still the studio remained unfinished.

I could make nothing of the Trobriand temperament. There were hours when the boys would work with surprising energy and enthusiasm, punctuating their efforts with boisterous whoops ; and there were other times when they would do practically nothing. When I swore at them, they would drop their tools and gather round to listen. The fiercer I became, the more amused were they. The Trobrianders do not resent being sworn at in English, for they regard it as merely the Taubada's customary manner of speech. But they wilt under extravagant sarcasm. Consequently when at a later date I found them slacking, I wasted no time in futile verbiage, but made reference to their similitude to little girls; and this produced the desired results.

Sometimes when I inspected the building operations I

found a number of extra hands had put themselves on the job, which when I first commenced building was exceedingly confusing, since I did not know which were my boys and which the new hands. My team were great brown huskies, but their policy was to conserve their strength; smokes and other breaks were innumerable, and "knock-off" times occurred haphazard. Leaving them safely at work upon a part of the job that they understood, I would go to the village to make studies. When I returned about five o'clock, I would find that music was the order of the day. A walking delegate had come along with a jews' harp. The toilers had listened entranced, and had then gone to rake up whatever musical instruments were available, in order to hold a happy concert on the ridge-pole for the remainder of the afternoon; there would be no more work that day.

When the main structure of the studio was at last completed, there was another delay while we waited for the roofing specialists; they were busy thatching the huts in the villages, and I could not get them until their contracts were completed. When I began to plan the kitchen, Dobu became wildly excited, working with inexhaustible energy. I couldn't even persuade him to relinquish his activities for *kai kai*; which was most unusual, for Dobu had given me considerable trouble, playing the "big man," sitting about chewing betel, and bossing the other boys. Now, his imagination visualised rows of neat shelves lined with crockery and pots and pans which shone resplendent. It was to be such a kitchen as no other Taubada ever had —it was, but not of the kind he anticipated.

At the termination of their first week the boys applied for an overdraft in "calicoes" and tobacco. Frequent were the requests for time off to visit sick and dying relatives: an excuse that worked very well until the "sick" relatives came to visit the building! I suppose had I wished I could have checked their delinquencies, but I had not the

heart to thrust the white man's burden upon them; it is falling upon them quickly enough as it is.

Their pay was ten shillings per month and keep, plus two sticks of tobacco and a sheet of newspaper each week. Some may say: "What a contemptible wage!" but these things are all a matter of proportion. They were not compelled to work by the necessity to earn a livelihood; it was the lure of tobacco and calicoes which brought them, and their wages were money to burn.

I must have seemed a strange and weird personality to these simple people. I was for ever doing things which no Trobriander, young or old, had ever heard of anyone doing before. Apart from my eccentric propensity for spending much good tobacco with the ultimate object of daubing paints on canvas (instead of on one's face), I had built a house such as no islander had ever seen. It was part house, part studio, and the pandanus-thatched roof had a good sized square left open, after the style of a top-light window in a studio, minus the glass. To the natives it must have seemed a mad freak, for what are houses for but to give one shade and shelter? People from miles round came to look at the hole in the roof. The gossips could make nothing of it. Wise men from the most remote villages made pilgrimages to the spot, and shook their heads sagely in discussing this white man's madness. It was the event of the year in Trobriand society, and doubtless furnished a theme for many an afternoon banana party.

It was a moderately large studio, 27 ft. by 15 ft. by 25 ft. high. One corner was partitioned off into the store. Adjoining this was a narrow space which served as the bathroom, the bath being a wooden bowl set in a frame of unshorn branches. Abutting upon the end of the studio was the kitchen, the fireplace being built of dead coral with a hole cut in the side of the wall for the egress of smoke. The furnishings comprised an empty packing-case for a chair, a crude table of undressed timber, and a bed consisting of

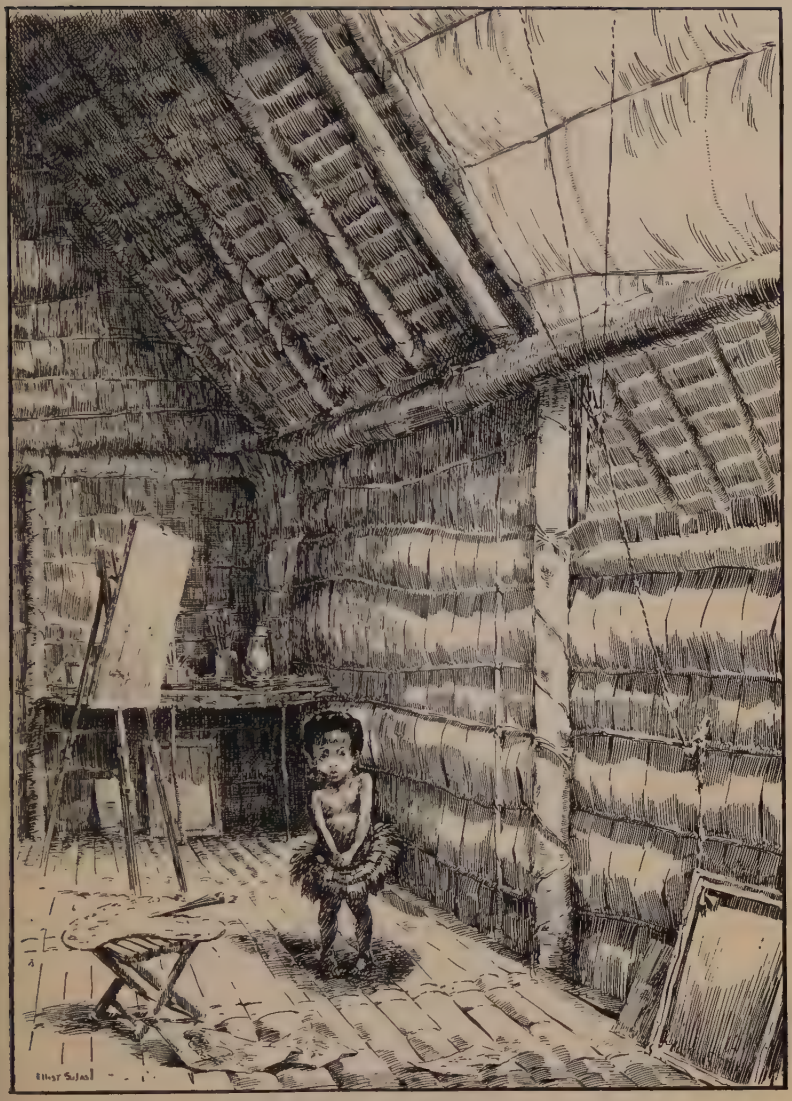

PLATE 13.—INTERIOR OF THE STUDIO.

The walls are lined with prepared pandanus leaf (*moi*). Owing to the intense light it was necessary to cover the top-light with calico, which, however, offered no protection from the heavy tropical rain.

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two copra sacks strung through a couple of poles which rest upon a rough frame. There was also the boy-house, a small structure next to the kitchen. The palm wall between kitchen and studio was about the thickness of fine straw-board, and as Dobu's domestic efforts were frequently punctuated with wild war-whoops, I was often disconcerted while at my work, trembling for the safety of my extremely limited supply of crockery.

I found my jungle home comfortable, within limits; unfortunately the denizens of the bush were of the same opinion, and within a week of my taking up residence iguana, rats, flying-fox, insects and an occasional chicken made it their home also. These things can be tolerated, but when it came to snakes—well then I jibbed. One day whilst working at my table upon a very delicate piece of detail which required breathless care, I felt the palm floor quiver. I did not pay any attention, concluding that it was Dobu going to the store. Then I became aware that the movement was close to my feet. I looked over the side of the table and saw, stretched across the floor, an enormous python. My studio was 15 ft. wide, yet when its head had gone out of one side, a large section of the tail still hung out of the other. It was between me and the door. I remained rigid, not daring to move, while it continued its way across the floor, and finally made its exit. Immediately it had disappeared I sent to the village for boys to clear an acre of the jungle which surrounded the studio.

I had several such visitors from time to time, but this was the largest. I possessed no fire-arms, and consequently for the first few days following these visitations I felt decidedly uncomfortable.

Housekeeping in the wilds is by no means a sinecure. When I first settled down I experienced the greatest difficulty in remembering that there was no shop round the corner and that omissions to order sufficient supplies would mean

waiting three long months in order to make good. During the monsoons, rain off the roof, caught in empty kerosene tins—when there were any available—provided my water supply; failing this, I had to send to the village water-hole, a mile distant. This water-hole also served as my laundry, except upon rare occasions when there was an empty tin to spare, in which case I experienced the luxury of boiled linen. Acting on the advice of a Government medical officer I subsisted almost entirely upon local products, fruit, vegetables, fish and poultry, of which there was abundance. For lighting I had a powerful benzoline lamp, which, however, I never under any circumstances permitted the boys to touch, since the day became dark at 6 p.m. and had this lamp become damaged, I should have been reduced to working by the inadequate flicker of a hurricane lamp.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES

ALTHOUGH, CONSIDERING ITS DEFICIENCIES, my jungle home was comfortable, the peace that I so earnestly desired remained unattainable. The population of this island is roughly nine thousand. When it is computed that at least 50 per cent. of the inhabitants are calling to trade vegetables, fish, fruit, and anything and everything which the island produces, and that in the course of business they will walk into the house—a practice which some of the traders encouraged—it can be readily understood that interruptions were frequent. These independent tradesmen brought their produce at whatever time suited their own convenience; if I remonstrated, they did not come at all, leaving me in peace but hungry. Moreover, if their tobacco supplies lasted them a week or two, the result was the same, so the larder was again empty but for yams, which were about the only imperishable products I could store in this climate; therefore the problem of keeping the pantry filled became increasingly difficult.

Dealing with these people is not easy; their methods are not strictly honest. They seemed to be familiar with all the wiles and subterfuges of the "civilised" tradesmen and added a few of their own invention; they carefully studied my character and habits, and discovered that if I was busy they could try all manner of tricks, often successfully. I once trusted my rogue Dobu to do the bartering for me, but between his efforts to "do" me and

the Trobrianders' entirely successful endeavours to cheat him, I found myself at the end of the day with an assortment of decayed vegetables, rotten fruit, eggs about to fly, and diseased poultry. My troubles were further increased since I experienced considerable difficulty in distinguishing between a gift and pure barter, and since in the former it was a breach of native etiquette to chaffer ; upon such occasions when I had not made what they considered a generous return gift, the donors showed extreme embarrassment, and were so ashamed that they would not disclose to their friends the seeming meanness of my gift. This practice of reciprocation is perhaps one of the most important of their tribal customs and is expressive of a particularly unpleasant trait in their characters, since they are generous only with their smiles : it is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth ; they expect payment for even the most trivial service. The most striking and almost humorous example that I experienced of this characteristic was upon an occasion when I was sketching in a village, when the owners of *every* tree and hut that I depicted demanded payment. This, however, may have been in part native guile ; nevertheless their answer to my refusal to pay was significant : " Big white king 'e give you money all same make *ginigini* (picture), what fashion you no give tobac ? " As there is no equivalent for " thank you " in the Trobriand language, it may be assumed that there is no *true* hospitality, and certainly they rarely express gratitude.

To avoid hindrances I barred up the studio door ; the natives considered that I was " showing off," and would walk round outside, passing very audible and sarcastic remarks about my being big *guiau* (chief). Since it is part of the pearl traders' policy to encourage natives flocking to their stations, my seemingly aloof attitude perplexed them ; maybe they were a little vexed, for here was the—to them—most interesting side-show on the island closed to them. The white men's houses are a source of great

diversion to the Trobrianders, who are as interested in our habits and customs as we are of theirs; besides this, all manner of wonderful things are to be gleaned from the Taubadas' homes—empty tobacco tins, cardboard boxes, gorgeous multicoloured labels from canned goods, pictures from magazines, with which to decorate the walls of their huts, and an endless variety of assorted oddments.

The vendors, however, were not my only annoyance. Sometimes they came to settle their differences outside the studio. One morning I heard feminine voices in excited and angry discussion. I called out for silence, but the noise increased. I put down my palette and brushes and flung open the door. My astonished gaze fell upon a number of infuriated girls, brandishing knives and sticks, endeavouring to break into the boy-house. They heeded not my expostulations. I shouldered into the *mêlée* and gripped the wrist of the woman who appeared to be the ringleader, compelling her to drop her knife. She struggled to release herself, eyes blazing, palm skirt ruffled like the feathers of a discomfited fowl. The others made a violent effort to pull down the door of the boy-house. I beat them off with the back of my hands. My boys were away getting water at the village water-hole. Fortunately Dobu arrived; explanations followed. The ringleader was the wife of a man who had been intriguing with a girl from an inland village. The incensed wife went to her village, collected her female friends and relatives, armed them with sticks and knives, and returned to "kill" the offending girl, who had sought refuge in my boy-house. I ordered the girls to return to their village. They refused to move and stood waiting for the cause of the husband's infidelities to emerge from the hut; they also picketed all the tracks leading to the studio with armed girls to cut off every chance of their quarry escaping. I explained to the viragoes, very pointedly and at length, that they must go to the village to settle their differences. The enraged

wife planted both feet firmly on the ground and refused to move. She explained that if they returned to the village the girl would escape them. I turned my head for a second. With wild shouts and brandishing of knives and sticks, they made a violent rush, intent upon overpowering all resistance. Reasoning with them was out of the question; they were infuriated. It was a hectic five minutes of yelling women, flying knives, sticks and stones; they made vigorous slashes at the palm-leaf door and stove it in; the frightened girl inside screamed, the assailants became jambed in the door, yelling imprecations and curses at the cowering fugitive. I had not forced their retirement; I was interested to see what would happen; but the situation became serious. I caught hold of the assailants by the shoulders and flung them rolling into the dust. I was contemplating taking more drastic action, when news came through that the Magistrate was on a patrol a mile distant. I sent Dobu with a request for a policeman to accompany the distressed lady to her village. In due course the police-boy arrived, and the girl was escorted safely away.

The climatic difficulties disturbed my tranquillity as much as the intrusion of the natives, since my house could hardly be considered weather-proof, as we understand it; and while I was painting the frequent and sudden heavy rains would force me into the only dry spot in the studio. Then during the South-East Trades, the wind blew through every crevice in the building—through the roof, through the walls, through the floor, increasing in violence as the weeks advanced, until I became almost stupefied by the incessant noise of it, which never ceased day or night for over three months, by which time the building had become as dry as tinder, when danger from fire was an ever-present anxiety.

It is an amazing fact that there are not frequent conflagrations in the villages, since the Trobriand huts are constructed of the flimiest materials and all the year round

fires are invariably kept burning within them. Some, of course, there are. I recollect one day when dense columns of smoke rolled into the sky over the village of Tokwaukwa and flames leapt from hut to hut as the breeze flung searing blasts across the narrow lanes, threatening destruction to the entire village, while the ever-present small boy sought to extinguish the tornado of flames with coco-nut shells of water—a humorous but pathetic sight. Girls and men ran up from the lagoon with sodden palm-leaves, placing them methodically over the roof of the huts in the track of the swaying flames. Ere the fire had gripped the huts, they removed their contents, flinging them over the ground : earthenware cauldrons, fishing tackle, skirts, shields (relics of other days), and all the impedimenta of the homes, lay in scorched and blackened heaps with the goods unsoiled. Old men and women sat watching their homes go up in flames ; these normally excitable people remained but little perturbed ; for when the gutted huts had crumbled into ashes, they did not linger to gaze upon the remains, but resumed their occupations, whilst the unfortunate householders removed their goods to the homes of relatives. The fire caused but little hardship. Work—the saving grace—would soon repair the damage, a little inconvenience whilst the rebuilding was in progress. They did not worry. Nevertheless, they had learnt their lesson, for when they rebuilt they widened the street and erected larger and more commodious huts. Never are the Trobrianders without fire. They take it with them to the gardens, when travelling on their canoes or journeying along the track ; always they carry a fire-stick (*kova*) with them. It is rarely necessary to make one ; means of ignition can usually be obtained from those already burning. But upon the rare occasions when there may not be a fire in the immediate vicinity, the following method is utilised for the purpose of ignition. A small piece of dried wood is placed upon the ground, then another small piece is

pointed and firmly grasped by both hands. This is rubbed backwards and forwards, slowly at first until a groove is formed in the log, when the rubbing is accelerated until the little heap of scooped-out dust at the end of the groove begins to smoke, when the operator rubs very fast, the action causing the dust to ignite. This smouldering matter is then placed in the middle of some inflammable material and is blown upon until it bursts into flame, and with this a few fronds of dried palm-leaf are set alight. The exertion of rubbing the fire-stick is very great; old men are not always able to do this, particularly on damp days.

To woo sleep at night was almost as impossible as it was to work undisturbed during the day; colonies of rats held carouse round my bed, and sometimes on it, or perturbed poultry sought refuge in the studio from the attentions of reptiles. Then again, my staff occasionally roused me to chase away Bwaga'u (evil spirits), and upon one occasion they alleged that these spirits had thrown stones at them, and it was some days before they would be persuaded to sleep in the boy-house. But perhaps the greatest of all these disturbances were the incessant storms, the pounding of torrents of water on the roof, and sometimes through it, the reverberating crashes of heaven's bolts, that rattled the crockery—and my nerves—and the lightning that seemed to envelop the studio in flames. Eventually these fireworks lost their novelty and I was able to sleep through these terrestrial bombardments, though the occasional earth tremors were somewhat disquieting. However, despite these disadvantages, those were happy days in that unique studio on the edge of the world, where I worked surrounded by the witchery of this mysterious continent with its curious odours and dreamy influence, where the warm scented breeze wafted the throbbing of drums, and locusts shrilled their interminable pæan of the restless jungle.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LOVE PASSAGES

I

THE SURPRISE CAUSED by my singular house with the inexplicable hole in its roof eventually subsided. But that, it seemed, was not my only eccentricity.

" What fashion this one Taubada 'e no got 'im woman ? " The question was frequently asked, such behaviour being to them quite inconceivable. " This one Taubada " was impervious to all the insinuations of the ladies. It became a theme of conversation in the villages, a matter of moment, a phenomenon that defied explanation.

Dobu was frankly troubled about it. He used to come to me and ask " When the Sinabada she come ? "—for he came to the conclusion, when I would have nothing of the native belles, that there must be a Sinabada (the feminine of Taubada) who would appear as soon as the wonderful studio was completed. I took pains to undeceive him. There was no Sinabada, I said. But that only deepened the mystery.

At last Dobu decided that something must be done about it. He would not be fulfilling his position as the best cook-boy in the Trobriand Islands if he allowed the household to remain so absurdly incomplete. Accordingly, he brought to the studio a little girl of about twelve years of age, accompanied by her father. He grew quite eloquent as he presented the child, and I am afraid he was hurt when, instead of responding with suitable gratitude

for his forethought, I rated him with much energy and indignation for what he had done.

A week later Dobu came again, this time with a wrinkled old hag of sixty or more—an inordinately hideous creature with shaven head and blackened body to denote that she had recently become a widow. His idea seemed to be that if I, in my acknowledged eccentricity, did not appreciate the attractiveness of youth, no doubt I should see the charm of maturer years.

I fear it was not entirely altruistic concern on his part. Dobu was, to put it briefly, a rogue, as my friend the trader had said ; and a wedding would, according to native custom, have involved the paying of considerable gifts by both parties to the kind friend who had introduced them. Moreover, I should thereafter have been an inexhaustible source of revenue to any Trobrianders that could claim relationship to the bride : in due course the remotest cousins to the umpteenth remove would have claimed their share—less, of course, a percentage to the ever thoughtful Dobu.

Unfortunately, Dobu was not the only representative of the party that thought it right that I should marry. The idea was, in fact, taken up with enthusiasm by the girls themselves. One day a more than ordinarily attractive maiden appeared in the doorway of my studio while I was at work. She brought with her a basket of very fine taitu and in my innocence (which, however, was now rapidly lessening) I supposed that they were for sale. I wanted to get on with my sketch, so I told Dobu to pay for them and send the girl away. Tactfully, he suggested that a sum about double their value would be appropriate, and, rather than waste time in haggling, I parted with the required quantity of tobacco. But when on four successive mornings the same pretty girl had brought baskets of taitu to the studio, I grew suspicious. I sent for Dobu and without much circumlocution accused him of sharing

PLATE 14.—A GIRL OF RANK WHO PRESENTED ME WITH MANY LOVE TOKENS.

Head-dress : Cockatoo plumes, scarlet hibiscus and frangipani ; necklace of *sapi sapi* with doga and shell pendants. She is lighting a cigarette. Note the short skirt of an unmarried girl.

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profits with the girl. He was naturally indignant. The taitu, he explained, had not been for sale. It was, of course, a love token that the maiden had brought me, and I, in accordance with custom, had very properly given a love-token of tobacco to her in exchange.

However, I am still a bachelor.

I explained, with emphasis, and, I fear, a certain fine freedom of language, that Dobu would do better to cease from rounding up candidates for the post and divert his attentions to his business. He did not understand, of course, but I think he went away convinced that the madness of the Taubada was incurable.

With these people, flirtation has become an art in which practice has made them expert. Particularly is this the case with the girls, who, armed with the witchery of their languorous eyes, pursue the game of love, always with warmth, and often with complete abandon.

Even the children seem to be gifted with the romantic spirit. Tiny babes show in their games that they have seen the manners of their elder sisters. And one has to realise that the games of the elder children are often not as innocuous as they appear to the stranger. One frequently sees a young girl, half in jest and half in earnest, deliberately starting an *affaire*. There is, for example, a pastime known as "catching girls," in which the girl herself starts the game. Peeping round the corner of a hut, she looks at a young man until she succeeds in attracting his attention. Then she runs away, clasps the hand of a girl friend, and comes with her towards the boy, retiring precipitately as soon as he tries to catch her. After a while she lets herself be caught and then giggles and becomes very shy and coy. It is, on the face of it, a harmless game, and certainly all the girls and women of the villages, old and young, derive great amusement from seeing it played. But it rarely ends as a game. The boy presents a love-token, an assignation is arranged, and the game becomes an intrigue.

It is a remarkable fact that although the Trobrianders show no hesitation in their advances towards one another, and discuss intrigues with entire candour, relating most intimate details, the greatest discretion is always exercised during the progress of these intrigues, and one never even sees couples embracing in public.

During the dance season, there is a romantic little scene in the villages, when the girls parade in pairs, while the youths look on for a while and then draw aside with the partners of their choice. There are also definite love-making expeditions called *katuyausi*. Then the boys of one village send a messenger to a neighbouring village to say that they are coming "on *katuyausi*." Everyone knows what that means, and the girls to be visited dress themselves in their finery and stand in a row in the centre of the village. Upon arrival, before revealing their presence the boys quiz the girls, then run forward, each presenting a love-token [1] to the "lady they love best," and the acceptance of the gift is an acceptance of the giver. Later, the visit is returned, the men then being wooed and won by the girls. But this free-love is not quite so promiscuous as it sounds; there is often a secret understanding between a young man and a maiden, which will eventually culminate in marriage.

There is, in the Trobriands, a remedy for unrequited love: a visit to the local sorcerer from whom a love-potion can be obtained. These love-potions appear to be singularly efficacious, but the effects are not always lasting, since counter-magic may be employed. One of my boys told me the story of his romance. "I see one girl," he said, "but she no like me. I give her *puri-puri*. She sleep. When she wake, she start, she say: 'Oh, I must go long boy.' Now, this girl she like me altogether too much. She follow me to all village; no matter suppose I go long way too much, she follow." [2] His eyelashes, at the time

[1] Usually a few pieces of *sapi sapi*, fibre armlets or some other small article.

[2] This is a form of betrothal

when he was telling me the story, were badly damaged. I asked what had happened. "She bite off this one," was the answer. "All same I bite off belong 'er. It fight[1] altogether too much."

Marriage is totemic. There are four totems in the Trobriands, symbolised by four species of birds. It is rigorously tabu for members of the same totem to intermarry, and it is even regarded as highly immoral for them to have intrigues; in fact, a couple who disobeyed this law would be ostracised and compelled to live beyond the borders of their village. Near Sinaketa there is a small hamlet occupied entirely by offenders in this respect.

When a man marries, his wife brings property into the family, for her family has to contribute to the new household in a very substantial manner; and it also becomes obligatory for her relatives to execute all manner of services for the husband. On the other hand, the husband has no claim to his wife's property. Husband and wife own their things separately, each controlling a part of the household property, and when one of them dies that share of the goods goes back to his or her relatives.

A wife is therefore a source of considerable power and wealth, particularly in the "upper classes." This, in fact, is, in a large degree, the objective of a chief in possessing a multitude of wives: he not only acquires wealth, but he has all the relatives of the wives compelled to work for him at more or less recognised rates of pay. Of course, he will also choose a wife or two at the dictation of his heart, but the majority come in answer to a more material call.

One chief possessed as many as forty wives, but now the Government has fixed a limit—though not a narrow one—to the number of wives that may be taken. A few years ago To'uluwa found himself in possession of the full allowance of wives, namely, sixteen; but he desired one

[1] Hurt.

more. He therefore applied to the R.M. for special permission to exceed the regulation number. The other chiefs objected, on the ground that if To'uluwa were allowed to take all the available wives (since women are in the minority in the Trobriands) there would not be enough for the others. The R.M. recognised the justice of this objection, but the limitation [1] had been fixed in order to keep down the power of the chiefs and the law had to be upheld. He therefore politely informed To'uluwa that sixteen wives was all that could be allowed and that therefore the new one could not be acquired—unless, of course, one of the existing wives were to die.

The R.M. would now admit that he should have known better than to make such a thoughtless remark to a man of To'uluwa's character. For, naturally, one of the existing wives was shortly taken ill and in due course the required vacancy occurred.

According to the census, To'uluwa has thirty-six sons and innumerable daughters. It was one of these daughters that Dobu chose as a prospective wife for me.

Among the commoners only one wife is permitted by the tribal laws. The majority of marriages are love-matches. Although considerable laxity is allowed before marriage, the regulations of married life are very strict : faithfulness is the rule and husbands are required to treat their wives well and with consideration, as otherwise the wife may return to her family, together with her children and her property. A husband so deserted may win his wife back by persuasion and gifts, if he can, but the woman is regarded as perfectly free and at liberty to marry someone else if she wishes.

Marriage is accompanied by hardly any public ceremony or rite. The bride's mother, as soon as the wedding is

[1] This has been instrumental in limiting the chiefs' source of revenue, and since they financed all the important tribal enterprises, these have suffered in consequence and are not now the spectacular ceremonies that they were formerly.

arranged, places three large pieces of dead coral in the man's hut as a stand for the family cooking-pot ; and these stones are always regarded as sacred, to such an extent that if at any time the husband in a fit of temper were to throw either pot or stone out of the hut, the wife would immediately leave him and would not return. But apart from the placing of the stones and an exchange of gifts between the husband and the relatives of the bride, there is no formal ceremony ; the wife simply joins the man, and they " set up house " together.

II

The majority of these marriages appear to be successful. In a large percentage of cases the man and wife live happily together until one of them dies, the husband frequently making presents to his wife—a marked expression of devotion, since no return gift is expected. Although several of To'uluwa's sixteen wives are young and attractive, the oldest is still his favourite and is accorded many privileges besides the right to sit in council with him, which, of course, is a great token of esteem.

But naturally there are also less happy unions and a *mariage de convenance* is rarely a success, since the girl invariably elopes with her lover. Laziness, as much as infidelity, is a sufficient ground for divorce, and this is one of the reasons why, as a rule, a native does not care to marry a girl who has been brought up in a mission : the education they receive there incapacitates them for domestic life, it makes them indolent, assertive and unmanageable ; they lose their capacity for work in the gardens, it alters their mental aspect towards tribal customs upon which the important laws governing tribal industry are based. Also their cooking becomes execrable. When her man comes home late from work in the gardens and wants a good square meal, the fact that his missionised

wife is expert at knitting d'oyleys does not satisfy his hunger. As one very wise old Trobriander remarked: "What is the use of teaching my children how to *count* yams if they don't know how to grow the yams which they are to count?"

Divorce is associated with no definite rite, any more than is marriage. The husband or the wife just leaves the hut and returns to his or her relatives, the gifts or their equivalent which were exchanged at marriage are returned, and that ends the matter. Either party is free to marry again without delay.

III

One of the strangest beliefs of the Trobrianders concerns the father's relation to his children. Physiological fatherhood is unknown, the accepted theory being that all children come direct from the spirit-world. The Baloma or the reincarnating Waiwaia are supposed to present the children to the mother, the father playing no more important part than to prepare the way by which the spirits will come. In fact, they believe that the spirits usually bring the child while a woman is bathing, and so strongly is this belief held that unmarried girls are timorous of remaining for any length of time in the water. On the other hand, it is definitely considered that the spirits cannot bring a child until a man has preceded them, and that is why the unmarried girls use methods equivalent to what we call birth control.

It is curious, however, that this belief is not applied to the birth of animals—for instance, in pig breeding, where it is recognised that physiology alone is responsible. I once asked one of the natives why this was so, and he answered, "Oh, pig 'im another kind."

This theory that the father is not related to his children is probably the reason why all inheritance among the Trobrianders is matrilineal, as it thus fixes responsibility

for the welfare of the children upon a definite person. The mother's eldest brother is the legal guardian of her children, and although the father may give *vaygu'a*, trees and garden land to his sons during his lifetime, he may not bequeath them his property, which at his death reverts to his sisters' sons, who are the rightful heirs according to Trobriand law.

Nevertheless, the father is usually passionately fond of his children ; he trains them and takes them on his fishing and other expeditions, and if a sacrifice has to be made for them it is he, and not the legal guardian, who makes it. Moreover, while the father gives presents to his children, anything procured from the uncle during the father's lifetime would have to be paid for.

On the whole, it seems better to be a father than an uncle. For when a woman marries, her eldest brother, besides assuming responsibility for the children, is expected to work for his sister and her husband. He receives gifts in return for his labour, but it is not expected that these gifts shall represent the proper market price of his work ; indeed, he would still be required to do the work even if no gifts at all were forthcoming, though such a contingency would be rare, since the husband would be ashamed not to make some return lest he should be regarded as a very vulgar person.

The birth of the firstborn of the wife of a man of rank is accompanied by important ceremonies and considerable magic. The husband pays the women of the village to make a maternity robe ; this is a handsome garment of banana fibre, reaching almost to the ground, and from a distance having the appearance of a rich brown sable. When it is completed, a ceremony is held. The robe is placed upon the ground and the women bend over it in a circle, their heads to the centre and touching the ground. In this position they kiss it and chant a magical formula over it. The mantle is then hung upon the expectant mother, who, about a month before the child is due, repairs

to her mother's hut to await the event. During this period she washes in hot water and never goes out into the sunlight ; this is in order to make her skin as light as possible. I have seen some of these women reduce their deep bronze skin to a light brown and in some cases even to a pale yellow. During this period the husband is not permitted to see his wife.

Shortly after the birth the wife is adorned with elaborate ear-rings, strings of pink shell money and other ornaments. Her hair is lavishly decorated with gorgeous flowers and her face ornately painted. When all is prepared, she is seated upon the platform outside the hut, with her attendants around her, and she is then ready to receive her husband and show him the child. It is a pretty scene, the most charming of all the Trobriand ceremonies. The woman seated with the infant in her arms, and her attendants seated around, almost suggests a new version of the Madonna.

From that time the woman will continue to wear the maternity robe until it drops to pieces ; also she will wear a head-dress. What this formerly was like I do not know, but at present they use a piece of calico doubled up on the head, with the appearance of a cap of the Tudor period. The *ensemble* of this cap and robe is very effective. At the first full moon after the child's birth the mother will lift up her infant and present it to the moon—a custom believed to make the child grow quickly and soon begin to talk.

Trobrianders do not rear large families ; four is considered a quiverful and seven a remarkable number. When I told Dobu that in Dim Dim one woman could have as many as fifteen or more children, he was so astounded that he called a number of women who were visiting and asked me to repeat my statement. They were all utterly amazed that such a thing could be, and there was no end of chattering.

The education of the children is a very important matter

and is arranged on a very thorough system. From infancy the girls are instructed in the domestic arts; they are taught to make their little skirts, initiated into the mysteries of cooking, and shown how to do all the work which is the woman's share in tribal life. The boys are instructed in everything that relates to men's work: fishing, building and sailing canoes, gardening work and hut-building. No slovenliness is allowed, for they must become efficient in whatever trade they are to follow.

I have seen only two children's games. Sometimes the youngsters obtain a pandanus mat, they all "hide their eyes," one of them crawls under the mat and hides something, and the others have to guess what it is. Or else the boys make wooden discs with a small handle at one end (*kaituwaika*), throw them so that they roll along the ground, and then try to hit them by throwing darts. This game was probably devised to make them proficient at throwing spears.

The children make all manner of quaint toys, drums, canoes, etc., but dolls are unknown. Most of their play is based on the life of their elders; they go down to the beach, build little huts, participate in sham fights, play at being chiefs, and make mimic Kula expeditions, complete with full "war-paint" and elaborate floral decorations.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

LADIES OF FASHION

I

I NOTICED, AFTER A WHILE, that Dobu's wife was getting very shabby, so I decided to purchase for her some new palm-leaf skirts, and instructed the negligent husband to procure them. As I was to meet the bill, I considered that I should have a voice in the selection, and accordingly I arranged for a number of "frocks" to be brought to the studio and for the lady to come there to inspect them.

The fitting took a long time. She tried them on both singly and in pairs, patting them into position, posing before my mirror and admiring herself, while the salesman praised his wares. At last, however, she was satisfied.

But then there was trouble. The skirts had been procured from a relative whose profession it was to make them on Kitava Island. Dobu's wife, anxious to impress her relative both with her wealth and her status as a lady of fashion, had pretended that it was she who was paying for them. The guileless Dobu—guileless at the moment at any rate—began to explain that it was I who was the purchaser. Great was the lady's indignation. Turning so that her unsuspecting relative could not see her face, she rolled her eyes and glared at her husband, telling him in an undertone to be silent. He looked at her in blank, and I think genuine, astonishment, while she turned from him in contempt and proceeded to show her relative which of the skirts she was finally selecting.

PLATE 15.—A TROBRIAND ARTISTE.

The head-dress is one of which there are many varieties, a necklace of *sapi sapi*, skirt of banana leaf; the upper layer is a rich scarlet relieved with tippets of pandanus leaf. In the basket at her feet is a lime pot and "trade" mirror.

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Luckily, at that moment I realised what was the meaning of the little drama, and was able to play my part, to the satisfaction of the lady, explaining that the tobacco which I had ready for the purchase was merely an overdraft on "Saturday tobacco."

Dobu's wife was the daughter of a chief, and doubtless it was this fact that accounted for her passion for keeping up appearances, but she must have had a difficult time with such a spendthrift of a husband. Dobu, as a matter of fact, was heavily in debt throughout the island, and both his Saturday tobacco and his salary were mortgaged up to the hilt. His creditors often called at the studio with the suggestion that I should pay his debts ; but they went away empty-handed. Once his brother came to stay with him, and Dobu not only borrowed the wretched boy's wages but got possession of all his "calicoes" and obtained money on the strength of them. He would have done well, from his own point of view, to keep the boy with him so as to borrow his future earnings ; but tact was never one of Dobu's strong points. He thought it would be a good plan to persuade the obliging brother to go to Kitava and work his gardens, the proceeds, of course, being forwarded to Dobu. But at that the brother regained his sanity and fled.

The wife's indignation over the matter of Dobu's indiscretion concerning the purchase of the skirts was not allowed to die a natural death. She was very angry, and she made the most of her grievance. In the end she left him and went back to her relatives—a proceeding that would have been equivalent to a divorce if they had not patched up the quarrel the next morning.

But even then the breach was not healed. Once again the wife ran away, and this time, when Dobu pursued her, she took refuge in one of the huts of the village. Within this hut was a married man, sound asleep and quite unaware of her presence. It was a most guiltless proceeding,

but nevertheless Dobu, very irate, came to me for advice as to whether he had grounds for divorce. "What you think, Taubada," he said, "more better I throw this one *vivila* away? She talk altogether too much boy."

It was a serious matter. At first I was amazed at his severity, in view of the fact that he had married the daughter of a rich chief and, in the event of divorce, would have to return her dowry. But then I realised that he would have given her relatives a number of gifts, and these would have had to be returned to him. It was likely that the balance was in his favour, and I could not help wondering whether the proposed divorce was merely a scheme to meet the importunate creditors. I asked what his gifts to his wife's relatives amounted to. It appeared that they had had:

One 30 lb. case of trade tobacco.
One dozen tins of "Yankee Doodle" tobacco.
Some Derby tobacco.
Three calicoes.
Two arm-shells.
One 8-row belt of pink shell money.
One long necklace of pink shell money.
One adze.

It was, of course, a handsome gift, according to native standards, but the bride had been the daughter of a chief and her relatives had therefore been in a position to raise the price.

At this point I sent for the wife, and established myself in the rôle of peacemaker. She pranced into the studio, threw a contemptuous glance at her husband, and stood facing me with her hands behind her back. I began to question her, but Dobu interrupted. Indignantly, she told him that he was *yari yari* (the Trobriand equivalent of being drunk), and added that he was only trying to get rid of her in order to intrigue with someone else. From that the interview developed rapidly into a free fight. Dobu smacked his wife's face and she retaliated in much

the same manner. There was a general scrimmage, and it was all I could do to separate the couple before serious damage was done.

It was, of course, a difficult problem, and I was glad that I had had the experience of seeing the R.M. at court when dealing with similar cases. Knowing Dobu as I did, my sympathies were mainly with the wife; but I was a self-constituted judge and I had not merely to deliver judgment but to convince the aggrieved party that my judgment should be accepted—a much more difficult task. However, I reminded him of the Papuan belief that when a man sleeps the spirit leaves his body.[1] If the spirit was not present, what was the harm in his wife being in the hut? She could not have committed sin with a spiritless body, and must therefore be held guiltless.

It was, I fear, rather a specious argument. But it appealed to the superstitious belief, which is all-important in the Trobriands, and justice was upheld. Dobu accepted my judgment with a tolerably good grace and set himself to the not easy task of persuading his wife that, as well as being the best cook-boy, he was also the best husband in all Papua.

II

The ladies of the Trobriands were fond, as I have already indicated, of painting their faces and dressing their hair. They were also slaves of fashion. Particularly was this so when the season of the dances approached. My search for models suffered in consequence. Earning tobacco by

[1] The Papuans are abnormally heavy sleepers, and appear literally to go into a trance when they sleep. A woman of Fiji once awoke after being asleep for some hours, and felt, when she tried to get up, that a heavy weight was gripping her right leg. She put down her hands and discovered that an immense python had come into the hut while she was asleep and that her leg was actually down the reptile's throat. But it had not been until it reached her knee that she awoke. This incident is vouched for by an unquestionable authority. Dobu himself used often to come to me in the morning with his feet bleeding from the bites of rats and cockroaches which had attacked him in the night without waking him.

sitting for the Taubada was all very well when there was nothing better to do, but at this season the dresses had to be prepared. The girls seemed to want to ask whether I could not understand that it was impossible for them to attend the dances robed in last season's rags. What would people think! Naturally they were awfully sorry and all that, but I understood, didn't I?

I did. I had heard the same answer so frequently in other climes. True, their raiment is so scant that I did not quite see why so much fuss should be made about it, but of course it is not the *quantity* of clothing that counts. Indeed, there is very much to be considered.

First, there are the banana leaves to be selected, considerable discrimination being brought to bear on the matter, for the leaves must all be of exactly the correct age, texture and quality. These leaves are dried either in the sun or over a fire, in which case they are arranged on four split sticks with a fifth to prevent curling. Then the dried leaf is held stretched across a flat board while it is scraped, first on one side and then on the other, with the fine edge of a mussel shell, until it is reduced to about the weight of silk. Lines are scraped to provide a pattern on the leaf, which is then cut into strips of the required size. It has then again to be dried, the slow heat of the sun being now essential so that it shall not become brittle.

The finished leaves are tied in bundles ready for dyeing, the most difficult part of the whole process, and the one always reserved for the older and more experienced women. There are two dyes. The first, which varies in shade from a rich vermillion to a terra-cotta or golden brown, is made from the root of a jungle tree (*noku*) which in its raw state is a brilliant cadmium-yellow. The root is scraped into shreds and then crushed by hand in a mixture of sea-water and lime, which changes the yellow into a rich scarlet or, if less lime is added, a golden brown. The other dye is madder and is made from the inside of the bark of the

PLATE 16.—A KIKITA VIVILA (LITTLE GIRL).

The ear-rings are tortoise-shell and necklace of banana seeds. Scarlet hibiscus in the hair.

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mangrove tree, the method of preparation being the same as for the red dye, except that the substance is boiled instead of being crushed. These dyes do not wash out, but the colours fade slightly in the strong sunlight.

The top borders of the skirts are ornamented with tippets. These are made from the leaves of the pandanus palm, being scraped in the same manner as the banana leaves but not to so fine a texture. The cutting of the tippets is most important, for on them will depend the essential difference between a costume *à la mode* and a "frumpish" garment. There is much variety in the design of the tippets, some being quite plain, while others are cut into fanciful lacework patterns.

When the various pieces of material are ready, a belt is made from pandanus palm leaf, and the leaves are weaved on to it. It is a complicated process, for consideration has to be given to the correct spacing of the patterns and the arrangement of the tippets: no easy matter, since there may be as many as six patterns to be worked into the skirt, each pattern being represented by a separate layer of material. For this operation the dressmaker sits facing an upright post, with her legs straight out in front of her. She fastens one end of the belt to her own waist and the other either to the post or to her big toe. Keeping the belt taut, she lays on, first, the simplest and longest strips of leaf, generally plain and undyed, to form a base. Then she fastens the main layer of leaves, cut rather shorter; and finally she puts on the tippets. She straightens the ends of each layer as she completes it, using probably a sharp shell or possibly, in these days of traders, a trade knife.

Then at last the skirt is complete, ready to be "tried on" —a ceremony which entails the assistance of any number of spectators and arouses quite as much joy and excitement as does the first appearance of a finished frock when it is delivered by a Bond Street dressmaker.

The manufacture of these dresses in the Trobriands is something of an industry. The girls frequently make their own skirts, but not always, for there are professional dress-makers in these islands, as elsewhere.[1] Of course, the number of leaves that go to the making of one skirt is enormous, and the work of preparing them and putting them together will often occupy a month or more.

The skirts vary in length. The dancing skirt, which reaches to the knee, is the longest; that of the married women reaches half-way down the thigh; while that of the unmarried girls is as short as it is *chic*. The longer skirts are less dainty in appearance than the shorter ones; they do not set so well, nor retain their shape, and they do not swing so gracefully to the motions of the wearer.

It is the villages on the coast that "set the fashions," raiment in the country districts being considerably simpler. On the whole, however, the skirts of one village are much the same as those of another, although those of Kiriwinia are considered the smartest, shortest and most elaborate.

It must not be imagined that these girls have only one outfit. On the contrary, there are different skirts for different occasions. There is a simple skirt, made either from long grass or from undyed banana leaves, for working dress; there is the bathing skirt, to which I have already referred; there is the best skirt, which is worn on all normal occasions in the village life, other than working times; and there is the dance skirt. And with each there is always a simple grass or banana-leaf underskirt.

One day I saw an old woman of about sixty, wearing a particularly fine skirt which so appealed to me that I arranged to buy it from her, and told her to bring it to the studio. Four days later it arrived. But it was not brought by the old woman: she sent it by what must be regarded as the Trobriand equivalent of a mannequin—a young and

[1] The banana-leaf material is sometimes bartered separately; dresses can also be hired—a practice which equally applies to other Trobriand articles.

very pretty girl, beaded, beflowered and beplumed, and wearing the skirt about her hips. The girl showed off the set and the swing of the skirt in a manner that would have done credit to a mannequin in London. But as soon as she realised that I was pleased with my purchase, she proceeded to take off the skirt, and departed from the studio in her underskirt.

The Trobriand girls pay great attention to the "set" of their skirts. When they examined my paintings, they always studied the sartorial details with minute care, and expressed themselves as gratified (as a rule) with the fact that the skirts hung as they should do. Where I had drawn a particularly elaborate costume, they invariably asked the name of the model; but whether in order to congratulate her, or out of envy, I could not discover. Once two very little girls, whose heads only just reached the level of my table, came to my studio, and asked to look through a pile of rough pencil sketches. I thought the finished paintings would have a greater appeal to them, but they would have nothing but the sketches, and from among these they selected, not a study, but a photograph of a Motuan girl in full dress, which I had procured at Port Moresby and intended to use at a later date in completing a sketch. The two little girls must have caught sight of this on an earlier visit to the studio, and had come back for a closer inspection. They studied it carefully, tracing the details of the skirt with their fingers and comparing it with their own.

III

The boys also are vain and spend much time on their personal adornment, although they never show as much interest in the subject as do the girls. When they came to the studio, they were more easily interested in such things as canoes or knives, and showed little desire to see their own portraits; except Dobu, who had self-conceit among

his very many faults. But the boys used to worry me to give them some of my paints so that they could decorate their faces.

Masculine modes, after all, are not sufficiently attractive to arouse much enthusiasm. In the Trobriands they consist mainly of a single leaf, cut from the base of the betel palm, and sometimes decorated with a frilled edge. The only other adornments are belts of shell money, fibre armlets, leg and waist bands, and ear-rings of tortoiseshell or sapi, with the addition of occasional feathers and flowers.

IV

The coiffeur of the Trobrianders is simple, the hair being frizzed[1] out with long-pronged combs, made either of bamboo split at one end into prongs or of mangrove with the handle elaborately carved. They copiously anoint their hair with coco-nut oil, in the belief that this is responsible for its thickness; indeed, they used to suggest that I should adopt the same remedy for my sadly depleted locks. The girls sometimes bleach their hair with lime,[2] the effect being to turn it to a rich golden brown.

Shaving is the general custom, in spite of the pain that must be involved in it. Where the hair is long enough, a piece of fibre is twisted round a group of hairs, and they are then jerked out by the roots; otherwise the skin is painted with a species of gum which dries hard and is then peeled off, the hair coming with it. And there are a few proud men in the islands who possess and use that most efficient of razors, a fragment of glass from a broken bottle.

Tattooing is not very fashionable among the Trobrianders, although a little ornamentation is often seen on faces and chests, and some of the girls tattoo their breasts. Some of

[1] Papua derives its name from the Malay word *Papûwah*, "frizzled woolly haired," in reference to their characteristic hair-dressing.

[2] For the purpose of destroying vermin.

the other Papuan tribes, however, practise the art very lavishly and very effectively, giving themselves the appearance of being fully robed in black lace of extremely ornate and often beautiful patterns. The design is dexterously traced on the skin with the juice of a berry, applied with the spine of a palm frond; the skin is then punctuated with the very sharp thorn of a lime-tree and more of the deep violet juice is rubbed in. Needless to say, it is a most painful process—a fact which probably accounts for the long time spent in completing a design.

Both girls and men sometimes wear thin, polished bones struck through the nasal septum, and some of the girls consider it an improvement to their appearance to shave their eyebrows. Personally, I thought that a peculiarly disfiguring practice; nor did I altogether approve of the custom of wearing scarlet lips and blackened teeth, which originated with the chewing of betel. I had more sympathy with the girls' love of perfumes; but perhaps that was only because I was accustomed to it.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE GARDENS

I

THE TROBRIANDERS' INTERESTS AND AMBITIONS are largely associated with their gardens, which are, indeed, a factor of sociological as well as of economic importance in their tribal life. Not only are the gardens a source of productivity, but they are also a source of social dignity and renown to those that work in them. To be proclaimed a good garden worker (*tokwaybagula*) is a distinction which every Trobriander covets. It is a title bestowed with discrimination, and the successful candidate must have proved himself a conscientious as well as an accomplished worker. This high standard of efficiency is a severe test to the endurance and steadfastness of the competitors, and results in a keen rivalry, these "wild savages" vieing with each other both in the size of their gardens and the speed and thoroughness of their work.

Industry is a ruling principle with these people. An idler and waster would not be tolerated: he would be regarded as unworthy of associating in the tribal activities, men would treat him with contempt, and the ladies would have nothing to do with him. Equally does this apply to the other sex; laziness in a wife, as I have said, would justify her husband in divorcing her, and such a woman would experience extreme difficulty in finding another partner.

Such a respect for industry challenges comparison with the outlook of the worker in our "civilised" countries!

Although the Trobrianders are proud of possession, they subconsciously realise that life has a wider meaning than the accumulation of wealth ; since they place their values, not upon the wealth itself, but upon the elements of the human effort which produces it, the personal touch, which, broadly speaking, in our civilisation is being superseded by mechanical science, and we are becoming subservient to the machinery which originally served us. It is a speeding-up of life that must eventually reach the limit of human endurance. Such, at least, was the impression that forced itself upon my consciousness while in that primeval world, and it still remains.

Once the work in the gardens is started, it is tabu to play any musical instrument until the activities are completed. This is a matter of tribal law and of superstition ; for, as a native explained to me, if they made music it would bring bad *puri-puri* and the taitu would not grow. They were wise old men that framed this law, for it kept the youths to their task in spite of the great attraction that music always has for the natives.

Gardening is mostly done by each boy working for himself, but sometimes the gardens are worked on a system of communal labour. Then the members of a village assemble and a feast is held. Afterwards, the scrub on the plot of the chief is cleared first, and then that on all the other plots in turn, each of the owners, in rotation, providing the food for all the workers for the day. Occasionally, several villages agree to work their gardens by co-operation, particularly for the heavier work—such as clearing, fencing and bringing in the supports—a method that is very advantageous for the smaller villages. At these times, the headmen control operations, the gardeners obeying their orders, since everyone realises the necessity of getting the work completed. This system is invariably adopted when it is essential to get certain stages of the work completed within a narrow limit of time.

Each stage of the garden activities is preceded by a ritual. Before the land is cleared the magician has to consecrate the site with a big ceremonial performance, which is the initiating rite that opens the garden season. The garden magician is a very exalted personage, ranking second only to the chief and the sorcerer of the village. He it is who regulates the garden work. Since each stage is preceded by a ceremony, it is essential that the work must be kept level, each man being ready at the same time for the weeding, the planting, and so on. The magician is the overseer who sees that the times are kept to, and he also orders rest periods, which have to be strictly observed. He also it is that invokes the assistance of the spirits in the growth of the vegetables in each stage of development. A certain garden rite is performed by the women, who are nude for this ceremony : it is tabu to men, who, if they intruded, would be maltreated by the women.

At the beginning of the gardening all the men of Teavi went in procession to Tokwauka to leave their hatchets with the sorcerers of that village, in order that magic might be performed over them during the following night. With the men went a number of male piccaninnies carrying lighted palm leaves ; whether this possessed any ritualistic significance, or was merely a child's frolic, I was unable to ascertain ; but to me it suggested the symbol of youth carrying the Torch of Life.

II

For a period of five years each piece of ground is allowed to lie fallow. Then the wild vegetation is cut down and the garden-land made into a series of mounds. The dead scrub is burnt off, the ground is left for a week or two, and then the work of planting is begun. Much time and labour are spent in making the gardens tidy and clean, all debris being carefully cleared away. Each plot is divided

into small squares, but this is done merely for the sake of ornamentation.

When the yams begin to sprout, small sticks are stuck in the ground for the young shoots to climb. Later, stout poles are put in the place of the small sticks, over each plant, and then another ceremony takes place.

In this ritual there are six participants, who walk round the garden from pole to pole : first a boy with a wooden wand, then a boy with a fire-stick, then two small boys carrying, respectively, a basket of magic leaves (*dodoleta*) and a basket of roots (*ulaula*), then a boy with a crowbar (the modern substitute for a bar of wood), and lastly the magician. Earth is dug away from the base of one of the poles, and the magician, kneeling down, puts in some of the " magical " roots, with some of the leaves above them. Then, bending so that his mouth is right over the hole, in order that the magic words shall not escape, he chants an incantation ; after which the hole is filled in.

The remainder of the party then move on to the next yam pole, leaving the magician for a moment behind ; he stands up, with his left hand resting on the pole, chants another incantation, and finally taps the pole twice with his adze. To omit this very important ceremony would result in a poor crop of yams.

A week later there is another rite. At sundown a number of little boys and girls cut branches from the bush, one being stuck into each plot to the accompaniment of a few magical words.

The gardens belonging to each village are situated together in one large piece of ground, each community building a section of the tall fence that surrounds it. When the garden is in full bloom it has the appearance of a hop-field, the vines covering the tall poles in garlands of foliage.

III

When the yams are first taken out of the ground, they are carefully cleaned and the hair with which they are covered is scraped off with a shell. They are then placed in conical heaps, great care being exercised in their arrangement and the finest yield being put into a separate heap for its better display. To protect the tubers from the weather a shelter is erected over them. Then parties from the village walk about the gardens, visiting each other's plots and admiring the exhibits. For a few days the yams remain on view and then they are carried into the village.

This, of course, is a proud moment for those who have been particularly successful in their work. The entire community turns out in full regalia, and the yams, decorated with leaves and with streamers of pandanus, are borne high upon stretchers, preceded by the garden magician who chants a litany to which the spectators respond. Finally, the yams are again piled in heaps, now outside the yam houses, where they will eventually be stored. The prize specimens are hung upon horizontal poles, which are supported by stakes in the ground, encircling the *baku*.

Villages will challenge each other as to the merits of their products. But when, after comparison, the verdict is given, the men of the winning village have the right to kick the inferior yams to pieces. Sometimes there are a number of competing villages, in which case the victors may destroy the whole of the other exhibits. This is a right established by long usage ; nevertheless the losers are generally overcome by their emotions of the moment when they see their treasured vegetables being ruthlessly destroyed, and a fight is the almost invariable outcome of the competition.

There is a final ceremony when the vegetables are stored in the yam houses ; and this is also the opening ceremony

PLATE 17.—A CHIEF'S YAM HOUSE, TOKWAUKWA.

With yams (*taitu*) piled outside ready for the final ceremony of storing them. The high platform on the left of the picture is where the Spirits watch the dances. Hanging to one of the posts is the food offering to the Baloma.

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of the dancing season (Milamala). Before the yams are put away, a large stone is placed in the yam house and a formula is chanted over it. After the storing, in the evening, the magician spits ginger root over the yams and chants a spell over all the roads leading into the village, in order that the food may be abundant in that village.

The yam houses are so constructed that the vegetables can be watched through the interstices between the logs, and their quality compared. The number that the store contains is indicated by palm leaves, a frond being cut off for each yam. The long ceremonial yams are tied to branches, decorated with white paint, and hung on the outside of the storehouse. But should a commoner's yield prove finer than that of a chief, the commoner has to cover his house with palm mats.

During the next three months there is a lull in agricultural activities, small crops of taro are planted, and gardening gives place to the hectic season of the dances.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE DANCE SEASON

I

IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE DANCES would be performed some time during the full moon. Although the Trobrianders possess a system of fixing dates by the moon and stars for all important activities and ceremonies, from a European viewpoint their method leaves too wide a margin of time ; nevertheless it is a refreshing contrast to the hectic chasing of minutes which is the lot of civilised man.

When I arrived in the village, a few grubby piccaninnies playing in the dust were the only visible signs of life ; some time later an old man appeared blowing a conch shell. Concluding that the strident notes pleased me, he squatted at my feet, continuing his contortions, monstrously distending his cheeks in a strenuous endeavour to produce more sound ; but fortunately exhaustion curtailed his efforts, whereupon he gazed at me, proud of his achievement, waiting for the customary reward, which in this case consisted of tobacco.

Then an old woman came out with a broom, made of palm-frond spines, and swept up the space where the performance was to be held. Then others brought mats, some of which were placed in the centre for the artistes, the remainder being put round the sides for the audience. More piccaninnies arrived early to secure front seats. An hour elapsed, with still no sign of either performers or audience. " Off stage," girls poked their lavishly beplumed heads out of hut doors to ascertain if the audience had arrived ; then they dodged between the huts, borrowing trade mirrors, beads, feathers and finery, and vanished

PLATE 18.—DANCERS.

Note the variety of types, particularly the refined features of the second man in the centre file.

PLATE 19.—A TYPICAL TROBRIAND DANCE.

These are men with cockatoo plume head-dress and women's skirts; they are holding strips of pandanus (*kainsoba*). Decorated shields and bunches of cassowary plumes are held in some of the dances. The building in the centre is a yam house.

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quickly lest they should be seen before they were quite ready for the public eye.

At last people came to the mats that marked the position of the audience and squatted there, killing time with animated conversation, smoking and chewing betel. The children—ever impatient—continually left their seats to see if the performers were coming, until eventually there were shouts of glee as the first performers, the singers, made their entrance—some fifty girls, beplumed, painted and beflowered. Very charming they looked, one girl in particular possessing an aquiline profile, finely chiselled nose and mouth, and an exquisite figure. The scenery and effects were by Dame Nature.

The girls seated themselves in the centre, in four rows, their legs thrust out in front of them, with the feet together, arms held close to the body, forearms in a horizontal position, with strips of pandanus decorated with leaves and flowers in their hands. The soloist sat in the centre, with two rows of girls upon either side. She sang the verses, the others intoning the refrain. As they swayed from side to side with the rhythm of the song, they made the pandanus streamers (*kainsoba*) move as leaves ripple in the wind.

In the next song the artistes faced each other, keeping the same formation of two rows upon either side ; the arms were held as in the position of prayer, and the bodies bent almost to the ground. At the conclusion of each verse the right arm was thrust up in a vertical position, the vocal part terminating at the same moment in a shout. The "glad eye" and mischievous winks were thrown at me whilst the singers rested between their songs. There was one unrehearsed item on the programme. A boy climbed a betel-nut tree to collect nuts, he slipped, stuck out at right angles to the trunk, slided gracefully to earth like an acrobat on a trapeze, and measured his length in dust. Shouts of laughter went up from the audience, but the artistes, like true professionals, continued their performance

unmoved by this absurd spectacle. The audience expressed their appreciation of the individual artistes by going up to those whom they considered the best, and plucking feathers from their head-dress.[1] Later the performers would acknowledge the honour by making a small gift to the admirers, when the feathers are returned to them.

The song cycle continued for about three hours, with short rests between, but the performers did not leave the "stage." There was little variety in the music, the songs differing only in the words and movement. The words of many of the songs are based on ancient myths, of which the meaning or significance has been lost.

Members of the audience when passing in front of the performers at one of these recitals do so in a stooping position, in much the same manner as when passing in front of an important chief. Payment is made to the performers in the form of food: cooked yams, bananas, betel and tobacco, etc. Only upon one occasion have I seen a performance where the singers stood; the movements were then almost identical with those made when in the seated position, the body moving from the hips, the legs remaining stationary.

Prior to the dance season the songs and dances are the subject of considerable practice. The rippling movement made with the pandanus streamers, which is a distinct feature of both songs and dances, is very difficult to acquire. I persuaded one of my models to show me how to do it, but my interpretation was very clumsy and caused considerable mirth to my instructress and her companions. During songs and dances there is no feasting; there is a similar differentiation in this as there is between our banquets and the theatre.

The Trobrianders make pan pipes, reed flutes and a string instrument consisting of a piece of fine but strong cord stretched bow-wise on a thin branch, the cord being twanged with the fingers but producing a sound that is scarcely

[1] This custom, called *taralwai*, is also practised at the dances, when bunches of cassowary plumes are plucked out during the performance.

audible. The instruments are made specially for the dance season and it is tabu to play on them earlier.

All dances and songs are the copyright of the owners, and may not be performed in other villages unless by purchase, when the owners ceremonially hand over the rights and later teach the purchasers all the movements and words. Sometimes a new song becomes the vogue for a short period; at such times it is sung by the men going to their work, my domestics hummed it in the kitchen, and the ubiquitous small boy shouts it. These songs terminate with a catch phrase in a manner similar to the old music-hall ditties which, years ago, added to the gaiety of London. The Trobrianders do not appear to regard these light tunes as serious music. Occasionally the traders' house-boy and my own rogues made a tour of the villages, "busking." They were mostly boys from East Cape and Dobu, where the songs and dances differ considerably from those prevailing in the Trobriands. The troupe were presented with yams, taitu, bread-fruit and other delicacies, also tobacco; altogether they derived considerable profit as a result of their enterprise.

II

Although the songs appear to be performed exclusively by girls, the dances are performed by both sexes, but more particularly by the men. Except in minor details, there is a great similarity in the majority of the performances. The drummers take up a position in the centre of the "stage," most of them carrying long wooden spears, a survival of the days when at any moment a dance might have been interrupted by the raid of a hostile village. There are two sets of drums, bass and treble, the bass being in the majority. The cylindrical drums are held at an oblique angle by a handle in the centre. Upon either side of each drum is a narrow ledge drilled with holes in which flowers are placed.

The band tunes up, and the drums give a tentative tapping to get the right time. A song is chanted in an

undertone as the dancers appear. Their hair is a mass of white cockatoo plumes, giving them almost the appearance of giant chrysanthemums. From their arms hang long streamers of pandanus leaves, and round their hips they wear women's skirts, while bunches of cassowary plumes, stained scarlet at the tips, are stuck in the rear of the skirts and their armlets. Their waists, arms and legs are encircled with white shells, belts of *sapi sapi*, and sometimes the much-prized shell armlets (*m'wali*); these, however, are not necessarily the property of the wearers, since they are often borrowed for the occasion just as the skirts are borrowed from women.

The leader of the dance is distinguishable by a long hawk feather stained and curled at the tip, which he wears in addition to the plumed head-dress. To the slow beat of the drums and the rhythm of the chant, the dancers circle round the orchestra, each dancer executing the same movements with pandanus strips as were made by the women in the songs. Bending the leg at the knee, they strike the ground in unison to the beat of the drums. Leaning sideways, now left, now right, they sweep round the musicians, and with a final roll of drums and a last shout of the singers, they come to a halt, balanced on one leg, in an attitude which is reminiscent of the favourite pose of the stork.

Some of these dances are performed at almost walking pace. There are also *danses au ventre*, but these have been prohibited by the missionaries and are doubtless of a particularly unpleasant nature, since I experienced difficulty in persuading the natives to perform even a few figures of one of these dances. There were also dances in which elaborately carved shields were used. The most important dances are, however, the Kasawaga, and it is the ambition of every male dancer to form one of this trio.

III

The season was brought to its conclusion by a grand dance called the Kasawaga. This was a most important

PLATE 20.—A KASAWAGA DANCER.

On his right arm is the much prized *m'wali* (arm-shell); the two belts are white cowrie shells and *sapi sapi*; the sprig in his left arm-band is a love token (*iyasi iyasi*); the streamers are pandanus leaves. In his right hand is a lime pot and spatula.

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event, and as the day drew near excitement spread throughout the islands. Everyone intended to be present, and there was even more than the usual amount of combing and frizzing, polishing, oiling and dressing. The dance was held at Obwada, one of the many villages situated on a plateau, the only part of this island not covered with heavy jungle. It was a remarkable scene, for there must have been over four thousand natives present : chiefs and their wives, native missionaries, village constables with their families, persons of rank, and the great general public. Piccaninnies raced through the crowd, upsetting stately matrons who were carrying yams ; the youngsters tumbled and got trodden upon, becoming a source of distress to their harassed parents, while the adolescent had abandoned themselves to a delirium of pleasure. It was a vivid scene of pulsating life.

They had all taken the greatest trouble to make their appearance as lavish as possible. Paint, feathers, flowers, leaves and shells had been used with amazing results. There was red hair, green hair, black, white and yellow hair ; and multicoloured faces, white, pink, black and red, all most elaborate with intricate designs, some of which were decidedly effective. From the tiniest tot to the ancient and decrepit, all were painted and bedizened.

The costume of one of the dance leaders was on this occasion exceptionally ornate. His hair was a mass of cockatoo plumes, surmounted by a large scarlet feather ; round his forehead he wore scarlet and white flowers ; he had red lips and a pink face ; one half of him from shoulder to toe was painted jet-black with a border of white spots ; garlands of yellow flowers were tied across his chest and round his waist, and his loins were encompassed with a belt of pink shell money with pearl shell pendants.

The dancers formed up on the track on the outskirts of the village. In the extreme rear were the three *premier danseurs* ; in front of them were forty drummers and spear-bearers ; and some fifty yards farther ahead stood the

ballet, who were held in line by men holding strips of banana leaf, while the stage manager—for such I will call him—minutely inspected the costume of each dancer. Crouched upon haunches behind each dancer was a man holding a bunch of cassowary plumes, intended to prevent evil spirits from interfering with the performers, while three men in a crouching attitude broke through the ranks of the performers and with long wands swept the tracks to the "stage," in order to clear the ground of evil spirits, while men with long wooden spears good-humouredly endeavoured to maintain a certain amount of order, as the crowd surged towards the *baku*.

At length the performers made their appearance on the "stage," coming through a space between the huts. Leaves were dropped upon the ground, still further to dispel malignant spirits. The dance itself is difficult to describe. A row of twelve men advanced a few feet; behind them came the three principals, with bodies bent so that their knees almost touched their chins. Each held in his mouth an ornament made of a white root with leaves (*doga*), and the two outside men held bunches of cassowary plumes. The centre performer put an arm round the neck of each of the other two, while they put each an arm round his waist. Then the dance began in earnest: it was grotesque, barbaric, and, above all, clever; for these dancers were artists of the highest merit. Keeping perfect time and rhythm, they swayed across the ground, advancing, dipping, crouching, retreating, while the chant of the singers rose and fell to the wild sound of the drums, and the excited multitude pressed forward roaring their approval. Ever round, backward, forward, swung the barbaric trio, the perspiration glistening on their knotted muscles, eyes bloodshot and gleaming under the intense strain, while the prompter followed their gyrations, whispering to them the time to change their figure. With a reverberating crash on the drums the dance terminated. It was indeed a marvellous performance.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MARITIME ACTIVITIES

THE SEA IS ALL-IMPORTANT to the Trobrianders. It provides their main route of travel and of transport. It provides the chief sources of their wealth, both pearls and *sapi sapi*. And it supplies a part of their food. It is their means of connection with other tribes and their great trade route.

Of their overseas trading expeditions, the most important is the Kula, to which I have already more than once referred. The Kula is an exchange of *vaygu'a*, in the form of arm-shells and necklaces of pink shell money. This wealth circulates round many islands, forming what is known as the Kula ring, a circle that covers some hundreds of miles. The exchange creates big intertribal relationships, the expeditions partaking of the nature of international affairs. It is a sociological mechanism of great complexity, possessing a rich mythology and an elaborate ritual of magic. The arm-shells and necklaces pass in opposite directions from village to village, often taking two or three years in making the circuit.

In the prosecution of these voyages and in the acquisition of this form of wealth the Trobrianders attain considerable social distinction and renown, and therefore it is mainly for these expeditions that the large sea-going canoes are built.

These canoes are of three types: for coastal transport there is a small, handy canoe (*kaiwo'u*), from 8 ft. to 16 ft. in length; the fishing canoe (*kailipoulo*) is larger and more

seaworthy; and the *masawa*, for the deep-sea route, and overseas expeditions, is the most elaborate and strongly constructed, possessing a greater carrying capacity, a higher freeboard, and greater stability.

To these sailormen their canoes are a source of absorbing interest. Whenever I made studies of canoes, their enthusiasm was invariably aroused and their vanity gratified. But if I desired the loan of one without its owner, great reluctance was shown. A characteristic example of this was manifested when I hired a canoe to make a short excursion on the lagoon. The owner sat watching me, in a state of feverish anxiety, and eventually his perturbation overcame him so that he beckoned to me to return. Imagining that something was wrong, I complied; but when I reached the beach he immediately hauled up the canoe, carefully covering it with palm leaves, and sought to placate my annoyance by inviting me to his hut, where he made me a peace-offering of cooked taitu and oysters.

In their leisure the Trobriand boatmen are usually occupied with their craft, scrutinising them for signs of injury or deterioration, overhauling them, and making light repairs. Often they sit expounding their pet theories, the salient points, merits, and achievements of their vessels; watching, with discriminating yet appreciative interest, the lines and sailing qualities of passing canoes, comparing them with their own. It is a subject of which they never weary. Frequently they visited my studio to see my studies of canoes; they would pore over them, discussing their technicalities and points with keen enthusiasm.

At a very early age these people begin to express the deep affection and fascination which they find in their craft. The smallest piccaninnies, just able to toddle, make and sail toy boats constructed from a piece of coco-nut husk with a leaf for a sail. Frequently these tots are taken out on the fishing expeditions, and when they reach a sufficiently mature age they are instructed in the building of models,

which are practically to scale and are constructed to show the rising generation the art of canoe building and seamanship. These models are accurate in detail, including even the carved prow-boards. Not only do these youngsters sail their pretty little models, but the adults derive considerable pleasure from the sport, in much the same manner as do those men who sail model yachts on the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens.

The Trobrianders take a keen interest in canoe racing. Like their pleasure cruises on the lagoon, it is one of their "Saturday afternoon" amusements. There is invariably a race when a new canoe makes her trial run, although it is understood that as a mark of courtesy the new-comer must always be allowed to win. In their ordinary racing, they repeatedly set a sail considerably larger than the canoe can carry, and capsizes are frequent. The canoes attain an amazing speed. I sailed in one that reached an average of fourteen knots, flying over the sea and heeling over at a dangerous angle. My fear of being thrown overboard greatly amused the crew. Certainly it was an exhilarating experience, as the flimsy craft skimmed over the water, speeding across coral reefs and over shoals of marvellously coloured fish, the sea hissing along the sides and breaking overboard so frequently that members of the crew were kept busy bailing.[1]

Should one canoe overhaul another under sail, a race invariably ensues.

The building of a canoe is usually undertaken by the owner himself, although he may employ experts to do it for him. The construction is in two main stages. In the first, the component parts are prepared; a large tree is cut, trimmed into a log, and hollowed out; this forms the hull. Frequently the timber required for this purpose is not procurable in the village. It then becomes necessary to

[1] Special wooden bails are made for this purpose, but usually half a coco-nut shell or a large sea shell is used.

barter for the timber elsewhere, in which event the vendors may contract to fell the timber and rough out the general lines, or they may sell the tree *in situ*; in this case the builder and his assistants would go to the village, fell the tree and hack out the proportions of the craft. In the case of an extra large canoe, it would be hollowed out before being dragged to the purchaser's village, which might mean haulage over a couple of miles of very uneven track. For this purpose pieces of wood are placed transversely across the track to act as slips—a principle which is also used in launching.

In common with every Trobriand activity, magic and ritual form important features in every stage of the building, from the time when the malignant spirits are driven from the tree to the final putting into commission. The tree having been selected, the Toliwaga (owner) and his assistants go to the spot and a minor rite is performed, to drive the evil spirits (Tokway) out of the tree before they can cut it down. This ceremony is absolutely necessary, as, if the Tokway were permitted to remain, the canoe would become heavy and possibly fall to pieces. The Toliwaga chews some ginger, which he then ejects upon the tree, and a spell is chanted in which the Tokway are requested to come down out of the tree and betake themselves to the coral ridges, where they are frequently heard wailing. The magic of these malignant spirits is much feared; they cause minor ailments and are a nuisance in many ways, so that the sorcerers are continually endeavouring to overcome their evil influence by counter-magic.

Tree cutting in the older days was an extremely laborious task. The stone adzes rapidly blunted, and frequently broke; and then the timber had practically to be whittled away to make a sufficiently deep incision to fell the tree. For the difficult task of pulling the heavy log along the rough tracks to the village, an especially thick creeper (*duku*) is used, and considerable outside assistance is

employed. In payment for this work the men receive food, generally pig and baked yams. In the case of an exceptionally heavy log a magical spell is chanted over it and the log is beaten with a bunch of *lalang* grass, which is presumed to take the heaviness of the log into itself. When the village is reached, the creeper used in the hauling is not immediately cut off, but severed ceremonially at a later date.

The outside of the hull is then worked, the two ends being tapered off ; the log is next turned over and the hollowing out begins. This is done with a special adze, over which a formula is chanted before the master builder starts work. The task of hollowing is extremely laborious and occupies a long time ; moreover, it requires considerable skill and cautious handling, as the eventual buoyancy of the hull depends upon it being reduced to an even thickness.

The rough form having at last been hewed out, it is placed in the water for two days to season and soften the timber, which becomes hardened and difficult to work after long exposure. While the hull is not being worked upon, it is filled with water to prevent cracking and covered with palm leaves as a protection from the sun—practices which are also followed after the canoes have been put into commission.

Simultaneously with the cutting of the hull, the other sections of the canoe are prepared : planks for the gunwale, L-shaped pieces for the ribs, short poles for the transversal and longitudinal supports of the outrigger platform, and a long log of especially light timber for the outrigger float. After being hewn into shape, this float is carbonised, to preserve the timber from becoming water-logged and as a protection against the toredo worm. The prow-boards are also cut ; these are carved by the Toliwaga if he understands the work, otherwise a specialist is employed. Prow-boards are very beautifully carved, a conventional moon and sun being introduced into the design in order that evil spirits may be driven off and that there may always be light for

the voyagers. The figures introduced into the design are invariably female, which seems to suggest that the Trobrianders regard their craft as of the feminine gender. The longitudinal prow-board (*tabuia*) is for the purpose of breaking the bow waves, whilst the transversal board prevents the influx of water into the ends—an improvement to the method employed by the Kerewa tribe, Delta Division.[1] The prow-boards are inserted into their grooves in the hull, with due ceremony and to the accompaniment of magical ritual.

When the component parts are in readiness for assembling, the important stage of lashing them together is performed. The stability of the canoe depends upon the strength of the lashing creeper and the manner in which the pieces are lashed together. Should this not be done expertly, in a heavy seaway the canoe would fall to pieces. The outrigger float is placed alongside the hull, and short pointed sticks are driven into it, the tops of these sticks being attached to a number of horizontal poles which are struck through the hull. This holds the float and hull together in parallel positions. Next, the poles are bridged over by many longitudinal sticks bound together, making a platform between hull and float, both ends being closed up by the transversal prow-boards. The well is formed by planks tied to the side of it, reinforced by the L-shaped ribs. Both end-holes and interstices are caulked with a bark preparation. The hull and prow are painted red, white and black, and but for the sail, which is made of strips of pandanus leaf sewn together, the canoe is ready for sea.

The launching of a new vessel is a very important ceremony, particularly if it belongs to a chief. The crew decorate themselves, and the Toliwaga makes a visit to all his friends requesting them for presents to " break the head of his new canoe." In sailing, the outrigger float is always

[1] In this district during rough weather a small boy sits in the prow of the canoe to prevent waves washing in, and in especially boisterous weather, as an extra precaution, he is plastered round with mud.

PLATE 21.—A DEEP-SEA CANOE (MASAWA).

Note the decorated prow-boards and the pandanus streamers, which suggest the pennants of mediæval ships ; magic is sometimes performed over these streamers.

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to windward, to enable the craft to stand wind pressure: sailed in the reverse position, the canoe would capsize immediately. These canoes cannot "beat," and consequently the mast is adjustable and able to be fixed to either end, according to the direction in which the craft is travelling.

When these sailormen venture out to sea, there are many dangers to be encountered, both legendary and real; and those of the spirit-world are far more dreaded than risks of the known world. There are the flying-witches to contend with, and the mariners' counter-magic may not prove sufficiently powerful to withstand them. In pre-Government days there were hostile tribes to be dreaded and the ever-present possibility of forming the *pièce de résistance* at some evening meal; and even now there are chances of shortage of water and provisions. But even these things are of little importance compared with the malevolence of devilish sorcerers.

A most amazing adventure of the sea happened once to two boys of the Solomon Islands. A ship was loading copra at one of these islands, the work being carried out by two boats working from the ship and two from the shore. Towards the close of the day it was noticed that one of the boats and two of the boys were missing. The shore was searched without result, and it was concluded that the boys had fallen asleep and drifted out to sea. On account of the reefs it was considered too dangerous to make a search that night, and when at daylight the ship put out to sea, nothing was to be found, although the search was continued for two days.

Five months elapsed and, the incident forgotten, the skipper of the ship had transferred to another vessel. On the day when he was leaving Sydney who should come walking up the gang plank but these identical boys. For four months they had drifted about the ocean in the small boat—four terrible months of thirst and hunger, with days

when the fierce tropic sun blazed down pitilessly and fearful nights when the storm devils rode the clouds ; day after day they scanned the sea for sign of a ship, while sharks swam round the boat in silent anticipation. They obtained water by catching rain in a piece of canvas ; for food, they caught birds which rested on the gunwale at night. One of them became temporarily insane and attacked his companion with a knife. During that terrible time they had drifted nine hundred miles, and were eventually picked up at the Carolines and brought to Sydney, to be returned later to their homes.

The Papuan sailor is an incorrigible optimist. He rarely, if ever, takes more than a day's food or water when embarking upon a voyage ; and should unfortunate circumstances overtake him, he will curl up and sleep, until such time as the chance winds may blow him to shore. One of my informants explained that " sometimes close up they die," which was also my unfortunate experience upon one occasion; but of that anon. The Papuans are expert at handling their craft, and make efficient boat-boys, sailing the trading schooners with equal skill.

In these seas the weather conditions are exceptionally variable and it is sometimes difficult to predict the sudden changes ; moreover, when navigating in these reef-studded seas landmarks are hard to pick up, so that the Papuan boat-boy's knowledge of local conditions becomes invaluable. Nevertheless they have their failings, not the least of which are their ingrained custom of tying up all running gear, and a weakness for falling asleep at the wheel.

To voyage upon one of these schooners, the sails drawing full to the freshening breeze, slipping between palm-girt islands, while the crew drowsily chant a native song, is one of the experiences that must ever remain an enchanting memory.

PLATE 22.—MAKING PADDLES.

PLATE 23.—A KAIWO'U CANOE.

These are used for short voyages. Note that there is no outrigger platform as in the Masawa canoes.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE SILVER HARVEST

THE FISHING INDUSTRY is an important feature of tribal life, for it is concerned in many forms of ceremonial. Some of the dwellers in inland villages arrange a kind of partnership with natives of coast villages, for the purpose of exchanging vegetables for fish. But these are not required for eating; they are for the ceremonies. In the agricultural villages it is strictly tabu to make use of vegetables for certain ceremonial purposes, and the fish is used instead: similarly fish must not be used in the coast ceremonies, vegetables taking its place; hence the system of exchange called *wasi*. The inhabitants of the inland villages possess partners in the coastal villages. When the harvest is garnered, the agriculturists bring their produce to their partners on the coast, who, as soon as conditions are favourable, will make a return gift in fish, which must be equivalent to the value of the produce received, but this differs from ordinary barter, in that haggling is tabu. Nevertheless, occasionally there is strife, and at the time I witnessed this ceremony there was an undercurrent of ill-feeling. There were several agricultural communities on the beach when the fleet arrived; they waded into the sea and surrounded the canoes to make the exchange, some taking spears with them. The trouble, however, may have been between the rival agriculturists and not between them and the fishermen, since there was not sufficient fish to meet the demands and some of the agriculturists had to return inland with their produce.

In spite of this form of partnership, the coast natives despise those who live inland, their term of derision for anyone whom they despise being "manibush," a corruption of "bushman." There is also keen rivalry between the coast villages themselves. Once, for example, the girls of Tokwauka and Teavi joined forces on a pearl-swimming expedition; but the Tokwauka maidens looked down on their neighbours, showed condescension towards them, and insisted upon giving all the orders.

The Trobrianders are expert fishermen, although to us both their methods and their apparatus appear strange. Their success is largely due to the fact that the natives of the coast are fishermen born and bred and descended from a long line of fishermen; and they have studied the habits of the fish that they catch.

Perhaps the most interesting of all their methods is that known as "swimming fish"—an amazing performance which I had the good fortune to witness. I was out one day in a whaleboat with a native crew, and we were becalmed. I was happy enough, lying in the shade of the sails, watching the amazing coral world that lay beneath me; the gigantic flowers of this fantastic land were lightly glazed with the subtlest tints of every imaginable colour. Marvellous fish darted about this submarine garden, red and gold and the brightest blue, emerald, black and multicoloured, shimmering iridescent streaks of light where the sun caught them in their rapid flight. Fish there were long and flat, without tail or fins, which appeared like strips of satin ribbon floating in the water. The shadow of the boat lay upon the floor of the lagoon, as though we were hanging in space, so clear this sea which seemed almost without substance. This fairyland did not interest the boys; they needed an occupation to pass the time, and announced their intention of catching fish. As there was no fishing tackle aboard, except the small oyster nets, I was puzzled as to how they would set to work.

PLATE 24.—"SWIMMING FISH."

One of the remarkable methods of fishing practised by the Papuans.

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One by one they slipped over the side into the water, slowly sinking to the bottom. There, to my amazement, they appeared to be walking on the bed of the sea. Looking down through the clear sapphire water, I could see them distinctly; they walked or crawled up to the holes in the coral reef, pushed a small stick into a hole with one hand and held the other in readiness over the spot where the lurking fish would be driven out. In a short while they had caught quite a number in this way, with their bare hands, slipping them into the oyster nets which they had taken with them into the water. One boy even caught a fish as it darted through the open water. This, of course, may merely have been a matter of luck, but nevertheless he made the attempt and it succeeded.

Suddenly I saw in the water beneath me fourteen feet of dull grey, torpedo-shaped body—a shark! A boy was just below it, and I held my breath, certain that his escape was impossible. A tragedy seemed inevitable. The shark saw his prey, turned, and shot forward. I shuddered, but could not shut my eyes. Then, with amazing *sang-froid*, the boy faced the fish, backing at the same moment into a deep crevice in the coral. There he stood, facing his enemy as it hung in front of him with its wicked eyes agleam. For the moment he was safe, since the crevice was far too narrow for the shark to follow into it; but of what purpose was that? The boy's breath could not possibly hold out much longer; then he would try to rise to the surface and the waiting shark would seize him.

Waiting and watching, the time seemed interminable, although as a matter of fact the whole incident lasted but a bare three minutes.

Suddenly the boy flung from him his net full of shimmering fish. The shark, seeing an easy prey, was lured away for an instant: an instant only, but in that time the boy had shot to the surface and clambered aboard the boat.

The other boys were already out of the water, standing on a reef ; but they were little perturbed, and even the hero of the adventure, once he had armed himself with a knife, wanted to dive again to recover his net of captured fish. But that was more than I could tolerate, and by good fortune a breeze came at that moment, so that we had good excuse for sailing away.

It is usual, when " swimming fish " in this manner, to take a piece of " New Guinea dynamite " (*tuha*), a concoction made out of root, which stupefies the fish when it is put into the holes. On this occasion, however, there was no " dynamite " available, and the work had to be done, as it was with success, without it.

To me, of course, the encounter with the shark was like the worst of nightmares. But the natives are well used to such adventures. These seas abound in sharks, and the boys seem quite unafraid provided that they are armed with some sort of weapon. Even when unarmed, as in this case, they can behave coolly enough when they are submerged : the danger comes when they are swimming on the surface, since then they can neither see their enemies distinctly nor manœuvre freely.

The native children are taught to swim from their earliest infancy. Some thirty miles from Samarai a white man was once walking along the beach, when he saw a native woman come down to the shore and deliberately throw a very young infant into the water. She stood quietly watching its struggles, and he, convinced that she was trying to drown her baby, ran to the spot. Before he could reach her, she calmly pulled the child out and returned to her hut. The next day the same thing happened. The woman was merely teaching her child to swim, the idea being that in deep water the infant will be kept afloat for a second or two and will instinctively strike out much as a dog would do in similar circumstances.

Some of the Trobrianders regard the shark as a suitable

PLATE 25.—FISHING WITH KAILATA NETS.

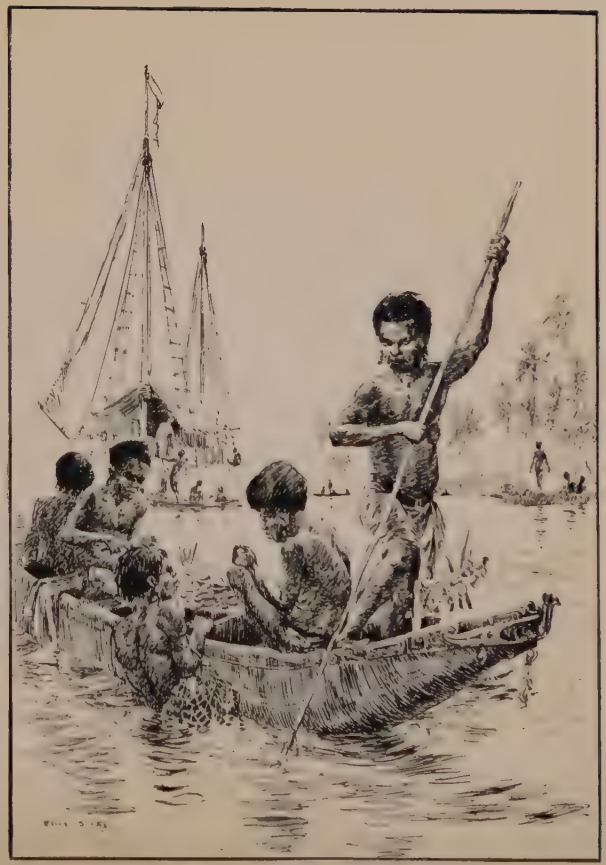


PLATE 26.—A KAULIPOULO CANOE.

article of food, although others will not touch it. For catching the fish a native will string half-shells of coco-nuts on a hoop so as to make a rattle, the sound of which invariably attracts the monsters. The fisherman then anchors his canoe on the edge of a reef, throws a strong line with a large hook baited with fish, makes the music of his rattle, and awaits events, which come surely enough. Other natives set traps to catch sharks, bending the trunk of a young sapling that grows near the shore and fastening a baited noose in the water, in such a way that when the shark slips its head through the noose the bent sapling will spring back and carry the shark with it.

Fishing for ordinary fish is extensively practised with nets, lines, flies and spears, but spear fishing is the most usual. Trawl nets also are frequently employed, and competent authorities tell me that the mesh of these nets is identical with that of the nets used in Ireland.

Prawns are much caught, for they are regarded as a particular delicacy. They are trapped with a grass noose. Sometimes, a cobweb fly is attached to a kite and dragged along the top of the water to catch garfish ; this, however, is an unusual method in the Trobriands, although common enough in the Amphlett group, fifty miles away.

A method that is considerably used is that known as the Kailata. Here the men stand in shallow water in a small semicircle. Stones are thrown into the open space and as the startled fish leap out of the water, the men catch them by drawing together two of the nets which they hold one in either hand.

As with everything else in these latitudes, there is an extensive and elaborate ritual connected with the fishing industry. Incantations are recited over the nets before a fishing fleet sets sail—a ceremony which lends dignity to the sailing of the fleet, and also at certain seasons of the year over the sea itself. The details of this ceremony are kept strictly secret ; indeed, once when the R.M. and I hap-

pened to be sailing off the coast while the ceremony was in progress we learnt that had we not been " Government " we should certainly have been attacked by the natives because we had trespassed at such a time into a sacred zone.

At an early age the male piccaninnies are instructed in the art of fishing. They are taught to make and put to practical purposes miniature nets, identical in pattern to those used by their elders, and mesh,[1] floats and other details must be to scale. One very quaint method of fishing is practised by the children with bows and arrows. They stand knee-deep in the water ; after throwing a little bait (coco-nut or fish) they remain rigid with arrow fitted, and let fly when the fish are within range. Refraction does not appear to impede their aim, some of them returning to the village with quite a decent catch.

One glorious morning I happened upon a village wherein all the piccaninnies, from the age of eleven years downwards, had decided upon a fishing expedition, the manner whereof was strange, for their tackle consisted of spider's webs stretched across hoops of thin wood. Light indeed must have been the touch of those nimble little brown fingers to accomplish so delicate a task. As they trooped out of the village, the sun making spots of light upon their shining heads, their little chests stuck out, proud with the seeming importance of their mission, I thought they were bent upon some child's frolic, but in a short time they returned, minus the nets, but each carrying a string of shimmering festoons of silver fish. These quaint Brownies most surely must have dropped from out the leaves of a fairy-tale. Intense their glee as they flourished their catch in front of the astonished gaze of the great Taubada, a Taubada, withal, who dreamed strange fancies, for of such is " fashion belong Papua."

[1] Fishing lines and mesh are made from the fibrous substance contained in the air roots of the pandanus palm.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE LORE OF THE KITCHEN

I

HERE, ONCE MORE, we find that tribal customs play their part in a very ordinary matter of domestic life. In the first place, food is an important ceremonial present.[1] But it is the fact of a gift being made that matters, not the quality of the gift. I was much incensed on one occasion when I found that a fine seven-foot yam, which To'uluwa had presented to me, was decayed. I thought that His Majesty was imposing second-rate goods on me under the impression that the new Taubada would not know the difference between a good yam and a bad one. But nothing of the sort was the fact. The quality of the yam, according to tribal custom, did not count: To'uluwa was not filling my larder, he was giving me a ceremonial gift.

II

I cannot, unfortunately, become the Mrs. Beeton of the Trobriand Islands, but nevertheless it may be of interest if I set down, in brief, the foods used by the Trobrianders and their methods of preparing them.

First, then, the principal ingredients.

Vegetables: Taro, yams (of several kinds), taitu (the smallest member of the yam family with a flavour similar to that of potatoes), sweet potatoes, certain leaves (used like cabbage).

Fruits: Bananas, paw-paw, pineapples, limes, oranges, mandarins, mangoes, sugar-cane, coco-nuts, bread-fruit, pandanus, nuts, wild fruit (several kinds), maize.

[1] This applies to produce and fish only In gifts of *vaygu'a* the quality is an important factor

Fish, etc.: Many local varieties; clams, oysters, cockles, mussels, and many other local varieties of shellfish, crabs, crayfish, prawns, rock cod, dugong, turtle.

Poultry, etc.: Parrots, cockatoos, pigeons, chicken; also other local birds and their eggs.

Various: Pigs, monitor, flying-fox, grubs and other insects. Crocodile, shark and sting-ray, although tabu, are sometimes eaten.

Tobacco can hardly be counted as a food, but I should mention here that it is grown to a certain extent on the islands, although with little success, the crop being of an inferior quality. Alcohol is unknown: the Trobrianders have no intoxicating drink and have not learnt to ferment palm sap or cane juice.

With regard to cooking, the principal methods employed are boiling and baking. But of course each article of food is cooked according to its own particular method. When yams are boiled, for instance, the skin is either peeled or scraped off with a shell, and they are then cooked in an earthenware cauldron filled with two parts of fresh water to one of salt water; large leaves being placed over the top of the pot to retain the steam. Taro, plaintains and bananas are boiled in the same manner. Coco-nut scraped into fine shreds is used in most native dishes. A fungoid growth of the mangrove tree is boiled and possesses a flavour similar to that of mushrooms. Vegetables are also baked in hot ashes.

Fish is generally grilled, a small grill of sticks being erected and a leaf bound round the fish to prevent it burning. Sometimes fish is boiled, in which case it is placed on the top of the vegetables in the cauldron. Meals are taken mainly on a communal system, with perhaps a dozen people to a cauldron, each supplying his share of the food; although in most of the huts I visited there was a pot of vegetables always in the process of cooking.

If ever I wanted a good meal of taitu, I used to go to the village, for Dobu could not compete with the women in this branch of his profession. The few tins of biscuits that

I had brought with me were soon eaten, and after that I lived entirely on local products. I did not have flour in any form—a misfortune, it appeared, for Dobu, who had achieved fame by making bread at Samarai.

Their *chef-d'œuvre* is a ceremonial dish called *mona*, which takes two days to prepare and for which special utensils are kept. A species of wild yam is cut into slices, which are then dipped into water and beaten into a pulp with a flat wooden plat, after which it is put into a cauldron with shredded taro, and coco-nut milk and a little sea-water is added; this is left to stand for a night, and the following day it is mixed into a paste with a wooden spatula, made into small cakes, around which leaves are wrapped, after which it is boiled. Nuts and wild fruits are next prepared. All the ingredients are now ready for the ceremonial cooking, exceptionally large cauldrons being used for this purpose; the final process is done by the men. The yams, taurai and tuwau vegetables being already in the cauldron, this is brought to the boil, the men stand round the cauldron with the final ingredients on wooden platters, one man with a platter of shredded coco-nut, another with a large wooden spatula some four feet long. Each consecutively drops in a pinch of the mixture, and at odd intervals some of the shredded coco-nut is added, the man with the spatula (*kainawa*) stirring continuously. Should it happen that the *sagali* (feast) is being held in another village to that which is preparing the *mona*, the final cooking is completed later when they reach the scene of festivities. The flavour of this dish is not unpleasant, and in texture and flavour it suggests raw plum-pudding of the Christmas variety.

During droughts the Trobrianders experience great hardships. When the weather is not propitious for fishing, they subsist on nuts, wild fruit and weeds, although their stores of yams generally last until the following season, but on occasions such as I experienced, when their emergency crops of taro had failed and they had put the main part of

the season's yield into the ground to increase their gardens, it leaves them with a very limited supply for emergencies. However hungry they may be, they will always strain every effort to keep their youngsters well fed. When the food shortage is very acute, the children's rations are supplemented with especially large oysters which is a different variety from the lapi, pearl oyster. It has been assumed that there are certain months in the year when the Trobrianders consider it injurious to eat oysters, but I was unable to obtain conclusive evidence of this theory. Certain species of fish are regarded as poisonous ; there, however, appears to have been no tabu placed on these fish, as the natives frequently catch them but do not eat them. No special dishes are made for the chiefs, though they generally obtain the choicest yams. Upon such occasions when I have "dined" with them in their huts they were always careful to place the finest yams on my platter, and were invariably very pleased if I joined them in their repast, treating me with the greatest courtesy. Sometimes I was brought a bowl of water to rinse my fingers in—a custom which they practise themselves, since they invariably pick up their food with their fingers, though sometimes a pearl shell is used. Platters and bowls are always washed after every meal.

The natives are very partial to the "Dim Dim kai kai," and are particularly fond of tea. Once I asked Dobu if the drink appealed to him. He answered that it made him "sick long belly" ; yet on another occasion, when there was a chance of his obtaining some "free, gratis and for nothing," he assured me that he "like this one feller altogether too much." This explained why my supplies had diminished !

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

A FEAST

IN THE VILLAGE OF GUMILIBABA the powerful chief, Metakata, one day held a *sagali* (feast) of exceptional importance. Almost since daybreak visitors from the neighbouring villages had been pouring in, bringing with them live pigs slung on poles, tall wooden prisms loaded with yams, sugar-cane, bananas, ceremonial yams,[1] resembling elongated sausages, lashed to poles. Every few yards these were placed in piles against the prisms, round which the dense throng surged. Native mission boys in white calicoes, traders' house-boys, plantation hands in vari-coloured raiment, girls and women adorned in festive attire, their shining bodies swathed with long strings of the valuable pink shell money, pearl shell pendants flashing like silver, streamers of pandanus leaves, feathers and garlands of hibiscus, and the sweet-scented frangipani and other gorgeous flowers tastefully woven into loops and tiaras. The men swaggered about in eight-row belts of shell money and the coveted white shell armlets, decorated with bunches of pandanus streamers ; slung over their shoulders enormous yellow lime gourds, hung with beads and shells which jingled as they walked, dangling from a cord the richly carved ebony lime spatulas. It was a day for looking one's best.

With Dobu ahead, I elbowed my way through the crowd, my clothes becoming smirched with grease and paint in the

[1] These yams occasionally exceed seven feet in length by approximately six inches in diameter, and are entirely different in shape from the ordinary yam.

process. The multitude was so thick that I was scarcely able to force a passage through the chattering, excited press, and in the confusion I trod upon a ceremonial yam, breaking it in half. The owners turned angrily upon me, and I thought, "Here is trouble," for the crowd was in a ferment. I gave the owner a stick of tobacco, and his wrath quickly dissolved into smiles.

A different people these to the Trobrianders as I have hitherto known them. Here was nothing of an effete people influenced by the mission and ruled by the Government; at the moment they have forgotten the white man even so far as to omit to ask him for tobacco. This was a reversion to the days when a tribe was under the sway of their powerful chiefs who enforced tribal laws and traditions with a strong hand. The influence of Metakata dominated the multitude; he wields his power more by cunning and poison than by strength of character, the trait which makes To'uluwa such a commanding personality. Metakata is notorious throughout these islands for his infamous poisonings. The Government have made frequent efforts to bring him to task, but he is too wily, too subtle; his minions are too afraid of retribution to lodge information.

The kaleidoscope of moving figures became bewildering, the air heavy with the nauseating aroma of coco-nut oil, and perspiring humanity mingled with the perfume of flowers. Men clambered on to the tall wooden prisms and distributed the taitu to the waiting crowd below, who thrust up a forest of brown hands to take the tubers. Spaces were cleared, and the piles of food arranged in the customary conical piles, surmounted by a piece of raw pig's flesh. The Master of the Ceremonies went to each mound of food, calling out the names of the participants, who without haste collected their portion and settled down in separate groups, where they chatted, smoked, and partook frugally of the fare; with cheeks bulged piccaninny faces peered over

ramparts of yams, little brown fingers drilling the monster tubers which they gripped tenaciously.

By way of the tracks which radiated from the village, numbers of the guests departed, processions of bronze figures against a background of luscious foliage. By fortunate chance a friend who was visiting these islands came to the village. Metakata had mats placed for us to sit upon, doing the honours as befitted his rank, presented us with the customary four green coco-nuts and then withdrew. The peace of the evening was shattered by the most ghastly and agonised screams. We sprang round in alarm : to our horror, quartettes of men were holding live pigs over the fires. The writhing beasts were lashed by the legs to piles, which were placed transversely across one another. For a second, appalled by the nauseating spectacle we stood irresolute, then we rushed them. My companion's fist shot out, struck one across the throat, the back of that unfortunate's head striking a beam. I hit another ; he spun round, stumbled and pitched headlong. It was an exciting few moments, of terrible screams of the tortured animals, panic-stricken shrieks of piccaninnies, and the thudding of fists. The stifling and acrid smoke and the sickening stench of burning flesh was appalling, while knives and tomahawks flashed menacingly. Like wasps from a disturbed hive they rushed hither and thither, but the suddenness of our onslaught bore them down and for a few moments they were bewildered, astonished, bitterly sobered, remaining hesitant ; then with portentous resolve they rushed the pigs once more into the flames, the quivering animals shrieking to the torment of their blistering skins. Three times we beat them back, and as they retired they dropped the animals into the fires. Somehow I dragged their heavy carcasses out of the flames, whilst my companion held off the now incensed and thoroughly roused natives. I trembled in fearful anticipation of their retaliation, but we had gone too far to withdraw ; there was nothing for it but to see it through.

We grabbed the man nearest to us and held him over the flames. He struggled and kicked in his violent efforts to free himself.

The man slipped from our grasp, his oiled skin making it impossible to retain a hold. For a tense few moments the issue was in the balance. It was a trial of minds—and we won. We harangued the mob, who stood glowering ominously, as we forced those nearest to despatch the unfortunate animals with their knives, they stuffing leaves into the wounds ere the blood could gush. Then we slowly withdrew to a strategic position where we could not be surrounded, and finally left the village. It was perhaps fortunate that we possessed no fire-arms, otherwise the consequences might have been serious. As it was, we were able to carry our point with no worse injury than bruised knuckles. Later the R.M. marched Metakata and his satellites off to jail. Nevertheless I wondered whether the former would seek his revenge through the customary medium of poison, and jokingly told Dobu not to put poison in my food. "Oh no, Taubada," he replied most seriously; "I no *puri-puri*, Taubada, belong me."

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

TROBRIAND ART

I

THE TROBRIAND ISLANDS may be said to form the Art-Centre of Papua, for it is from the work of their artist-craftsmen that the wood-carvers of other parts of New Guinea derive some at least of their inspiration.

The Trobrianders, as a race, possess a keen sense of the æsthetic and a love of the beautiful, which is exemplified in many branches of their life, but most in their work as wood-carvers. The origins of their art are unknown; the present workers know practically nothing of the work that has preceded them, and it is therefore impossible to do more than make very tentative conjectures upon the subject.

The varied nature of their designs suggests that the Trobrianders were, at some remote period, migrants from several different tribes; but so little is known of their origin as a race that it is difficult to pursue that line of argument. On the other hand, it can be argued with much greater safety that Asiatic influence has reached them, probably by way of the Malay Archipelago. The designs of the handles of their lime spatulas, in particular, bear a strong resemblance to the art of Burma and Java; and the decorative manner in which they treat conventional birds and fish, their clever handling of detail, and their love of lavish ornamentation are strong evidence of this Asiatic origin. It is to be regretted that there are no specimens of their work of great age now extant, but this could not be in the case

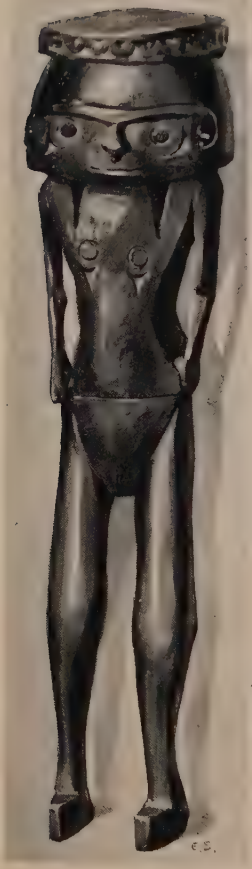
of work executed in a tropical climate upon such a perishable medium—in their country—as wood.

In various villages can be found one or two men who are efficient wood-carvers, but the centre of the industry is at Boitalu, where the people specialise in this form of art, and are esteemed in consequence in that one part of their life, although in all other matters they are severely ostracised and despised on account of their habit of eating the wild pig and the sting-ray. Their neighbours will carry on trade with the Boitaluians because of the value of their carvings, but no self-respecting Trobriander from any other village would think of marrying, or even of carrying on an intrigue with anyone from this despised village.

The Trobriand artists are diligent and enthusiastic workers. They work under impulse and love of their art rather than from any idea of necessity ; if a wood-carver finds an exceptionally fine piece of timber, he will concentrate all his attention upon carving it, and often a man will carry a partially carved spatula wherever he goes in order that he may finish it when the spirit moves him. And although a piece of carving may be begun for purely mundane purposes, if the artist is pleased with his work nothing can persuade him to part with it ; he will keep it as an ornament.

Whenever I visited a village that contained a wood-carver the work was brought out that I might see it. If the piece was only in the rough, the artist and his friends would point out the lines that the design would take ; and they were particularly pleased if I would watch them as they worked, handling their tools with dexterity and with feeling. Sometimes I pointed out places where the work appeared scamped, and they would hasten to make a correction ; or else if I criticised the efforts of an apprentice, the boy would be called and the mistake shown to him.

The wood-workers fashion tools for themselves out of such pieces of metal as they can glean from the rubbish-



NO. 2.

NO. 3.

NO. 1.

NO. 4.

PLATE 27.—TROBRIAND WOOD-CARVINGS.

To face p. 203.

heaps of the traders ; large nails are particularly valued, for the ends can be flattened out in the form of chisels ; and the little tin-openers supplied with canned goods are similarly used. For mallet they use a short piece of mangrove, rounded at the top and tapered at the base.

It is a remarkable fact that these artists never make any preliminary drawing of their designs. They succeed in visualising the completed piece and are able to work out the proportions as the carving progresses. Particularly is this apparent in the patterned borders of their bowls, where a running pattern of even spacing is frequently used, although there is rarely, if ever, the slightest sign of overlapping at the point where the beginning and end of the design meet.

Another quality of interest in their work is their capacity for cutting out a nearly perfect circle without mechanical aid. There is a rhythm and sense of movement in the flowing lines of their ornamentation which relieve any tendency to heaviness. This is especially evident in some of their carvings of the human figure and of pigs. Note their innate sense of design in the introduction of decorations on the forelegs of the pig (No. 2) to balance the scrollwork on the tail. Of the numerous specimens of their work which I have examined, whether it be the elaborate carvings upon the front of a food-house, the prows of canoes, or less important pieces, the design was always good ; even in cases where the execution of the work was of inferior quality the design was invariably well balanced and expressive, and always with the clever craftsman's instinct of the limitations of their material and the restrictions imposed by the crude implements which they use. They never attempt a useless *tour de force*, invariably basing their designs upon the strongest constructional lines. They do not understand even the simplest joinery, so that the whole object must necessarily be carved from the single piece of timber. Very little, if any, undercutting is used, but a method of piercing right through the wood, similar to

fretwork, is extensively employed, particularly on their smaller pieces such as the lime spatulas. Bas-relief is rarely practised, and to relieve the otherwise flat, dead appearance which would occur in their ornament they enrich the design by making deeper incisions in sections of the detail. Their modelling in the high relief is, as a rule, very crude, although I happened to see one carving—a female figure—in which the modelling of the busts was in its way a remarkable achievement. They were delicately modelled, with that simple suggestion of form which is so much a feature of Egyptian art.

The method of work is simple. Mangrove, a hard wood called *maku*, and ebony are used, and first the main proportions are hewn out with a wooden adze with a head of a very durable stone. Then, with a finer adze the outlines of the design are cut. Next the surface is rubbed down with the skin of a sting-ray, which is far superior and more durable than sand-paper. The more delicate ornament is cut with a shark's tooth set in a wooden handle, or with small sharpened stones.

For rounding bowls, or similar work, the sharpened edge of the curved tusk of a wild boar is used, the curve lending itself admirably to the purpose. Of course, many of these implements are now superseded by tools obtained from the traders, but with the more efficient tools they are receiving an influence which is gradually overriding their own inspiration. The ornamental details of their carving are often relieved with colour; black, red and white being used for the purpose. The intaglio of the ornamental borders of bowls is invariably filled in with white chalk.

The imitative faculty is strongly developed in these native artists, but in their efforts to come into line with modern requirements, constructional stability is presenting increasing difficulties, to which is due a great deal of the bad proportion and poor design of their "trade" products, coupled with the lack of interest in the work, for much of the incentive of

their earlier efforts was due to the value of possessing something beautiful. Their later examples do not receive the careful thought and workmanship that was the custom when they carved objects for their own use, but the rich carving on their canoes still remain equal to their highest standard. In the early days even the most trivial of the Trobrianders' utensils received some form of decoration. Their fishing nets were supplied with wooden floats, some hundreds to each net ; but each float was elaborately carved.

Although the major portion of the Trobrianders' " trade " work shows a marked decadence, there are occasional flashes of inspiration, such as the busts of the figure already alluded to, and other details which I have observed in their more recent productions ; their carving of the bowls is still maintained at a high standard. In all the older examples of their art they kept strictly within the confines of conventionalism, but in their present models they are breaking away from their tradition, making many attempts at naturalism, which in the figure-work is crudely grotesque and lacking the dignity of their earlier specimens.

The details of the carvings on the yam houses are birds, fish, prows of canoes and waves ; a figure is affixed to the ridge pole, which is very suggestive of a gargoyle : these are put up to ward off evil spirits. In the villages of Iaragua and Sinaketa a moon is introduced into the design which serves the same purpose, the native belief being that some evil spirits only work in the dark, and when they saw the moon they would flee. Introduced into the design on the prow-boards of the canoes there is a sun and moon, in order that the canoe shall always have light during the voyage ; a betel-nut mortar and leaves, both of which are used in canoe magic ; also the arms of a woman held in the position as when dancing.[1] The wooden images (*tukwalu*) were

[1] In Dutch New Guinea there are images (*kawars*) representing a recently dead progenitor, whose spirit is then invoked to occupy the image to protect them from their enemies and bring success to their enterprises.

carved as protection against evil magic. A man expecting assassination would obtain one of these figures and place it at the head of his bed. The figure was presumed to possess the power of jumping up and killing the assassin by knocking him on the head; this was my cook-boy's explanation. What is more probable is that the image was taken to a sorcerer and evil magic was performed over it, and when the assassin saw the figures, afraid of the magic, he retired. These images (*tukwalu*) are also introduced into the prow-boards of the canoes, but in this instance they are female figures.

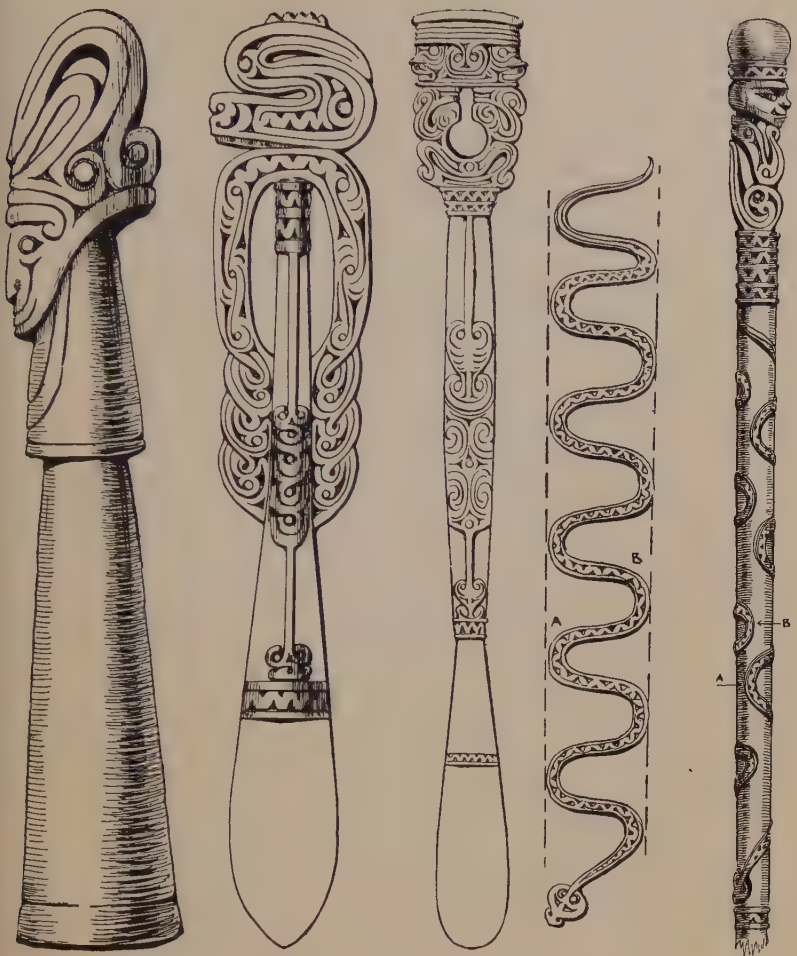
PIGMENTS USED FOR FACIAL AND BODY DECORATION.

Betel-nut juice (scarlet).
A chalky soil found on the beaches (white).
Charcoal, mixed with taro and water (black).
A dye made from crushed berries (purple).

FOR RELIEVING CARVED ORNAMENTS ON CANOES AND HOUSES.

A red clay.
Chalk soil, white.
Charcoal.

I only know the name of one of these artists who has achieved personal distinction: this is Tobulagita of Vakuta, famous for his remarkable and beautiful carvings of sticks and wands. A comparison of the illustrations here reproduced is instructive. (No. 4.) The head of a walking-stick: this is suggestive of the Renaissance in the arrangement of the figures. (No. 8.) The snake is almost Chinese in expression: in the illustration I have spread this out in order to show it to better advantage. No. 1 is singularly reminiscent of the Egyptian treatment of the figure. No. 5, a lime mortar, is Assyrian in conception. No. 7, a lime spatula, is notably Javanese in treatment. In some of the specimens here illustrated a strong resemblance to Maori carvings will also be noted. So here we have—in part at least—the characteristics of the art of five distinct races embodied in the designs of the Trobrianders, which is very remarkable in view of the fact that whatever may have been



NO. 5. NO. 6. NO. 7. NO. 8.

PLATE 28.—TROBRIAND WOOD-CARVINGS.

To face p. 206.

the original outside sources from which these people derived their art, they are so remote that their consideration as factors in influencing their work is practically negligible.

The Trobrianders are able to read a rough sketch quite well. I was particularly careful to note this, as quite a number of the resident Europeans in Papua had told me that a Papuan cannot understand an illustration clearly. Often when I was at work in the villages they would compare the details in my picture with the view itself, and I have put them through many tests, showing them very arbitrary sketches and asking them to name the things depicted, which they did without any hesitation. And when I have handed them a study to look at, they have always held it in the correct position. In the case of a sketch which I had torn up, I later discovered this drawing pieced together and stuck up in a hut in the village—a supreme test which, strangely enough, I had omitted to make. In view of these facts, it struck me as odd that in a number of instances the mission natives drew the block letters backward or inverted.

A trader told me his boy's definition of my painting, which is worth recording: "What fashion belong 'im this one Dim Dim? 'E come 'long village with bokis (box), 'e look 'long coco-nut, 'e take 'im altogether something like hair belong 'im (paint brush), 'e put 'im water, put 'im altogether somethin' 'long board (palette); quick time 'e make look village on board (canvas) all same I want to make walk about 'long 'im (the picture). One time 'e take 'im paper, I look 'im make boy. I never see fashion all same 'im 'long New Guinea."

II

One cannot omit from a summary of the Trobrianders' artistic work the floral decoration of their hair and their facial decorations, which, as I have indicated, are often intricate and highly fanciful. When I first saw them I was disposed to regard this ornamentation as grotesque,

actually this is not so. The Trobriander appears to feel instinctively the need for a touch of colour to relieve the monotonous tones of his, or her, dark skin. Sometimes, by way of an experiment, I gave the villagers the choice of my oil paints, in order to see which would most appeal to them for facial decoration, and I found that they chose the colours in the following order: vermillion, light chrome, orange-chrome, crimson, cobalt-blue, black and white. Green made no appeal to them at all; which is a further proof of their subconscious sense of the æsthetic, green and brown being the colours that naturally surround them in their daily life.

III

It is intensely to be regretted that the art of the Trobrianders is undoubtedly fading. The net-floats to which I have already referred are no longer carved, plain pieces of wood being used. Many utensils which a few years ago were invariably decorated are no longer the subject of ornamentation. On the other hand, much useless and inartistic carving is done, to meet the demands of white traders.

The character of the Trobrianders is changing. The missionaries are destroying their belief in spirits, from which they derive their inspiration, the Government unconsciously encourages the production of cheap "trade carvings" by the imposition of a tax that has to be made, so that a sense has come over him that work must be done, not for the love of it, but for what it will fetch.

It is but one more example of the soul-destroying character of civilisation.

ADRIFT

To vary my subjects I decided to run over to Fergusson Island, whose rugged heights are usually visible from the Trobriands and are a prominent feature of the

landscape. So with more confidence than experience I embarked upon a small schooner with a crew of five boys, but when at the end of a long day we had advanced but eight miles of a fifty-mile journey, I commenced to lose interest in the project; tide rips and adverse winds held us, drove us off our course. Expecting bad weather, I placed a look-out, ordered the sheets to be unlashed—which in customary Papuan fashion had been tied down—made all snug and went below for a spell; but not to sleep, for in every cranny they could find for rearing a brood, cockroaches hung in clusters. If I dozed for a second, they scuttled over my face and attacked my toes. At last unable to endure the vermin and the fœtid cabin, I returned discomfited to the streaming deck. As we drove before the storm, the pyramidal island of Dom Dom sprung out of the mist, a scowling mass of shadow against a blurred and watery moon, giving the anxious helmsman a mark to steer upon. About dawn the weather cleared, and soon the sun lifted itself indolently from the delicate mist that veiled its rising, melting every overhanging cloud as it soared to its zenith. The sails sagged in the failing breeze, and we lay becalmed, drifting in the heavy tideway. As the day advanced the heat became insufferable, and the kerosene tins—our water-supply—were nearly empty. We were off the track of possible schooners and might be drifting, perhaps a day, perhaps a week, on the strong current that flows towards New Britain. The crew looked at the receeding coastline which hung nebulous on the horizon, then went below to sleep. Not a sound disturbed the heat-misted solitude, but the creaking of gear and the low moan of the sea as it surged round stark sand patches, past which we drifted but could not reach. With the memory of the fate of other vessels, I became alarmed at the possible peril of our situation, and roused the reluctant crew to action. The sweeps were got out in the hope of reaching one of the small atolls or possibly striking a landward current,

but our efforts were unavailing; it was impossible to even hold the boat against the powerful tide. I lashed the crew with my tongue as we sweated over the heavy oars. At that moment I fervently wished we had been under power. However, as it is I have no regrets, and I am the richer for the experience. One of the crew recited a spell invoking the wind, gave up and remarked: "No good, Taubada; goodfeller weather *bwaga'u*, strong feller too much." With a little coco-nut milk to eke out our water-supply, we drifted throughout that burning day, until the sun cut away the horizon in its sinking, then died in a flaming riot of colour that suffused our world with crimson and gold, and the sea became a vast sheet of copper. The tide slackened, and another attempt was made with the sweeps. In that vast expanse of night, no line marked where sea met sky, and we seemed to be drifting in illimitable space. The crew filled in the long hours sleeping, chewing sugar-cane and reciting spells. First one would commence the weird incantation until the whole five were chanting, all of them facing the direction from which they presumed the wind might come. About midday one of them who was up the mast slid down and shouted the welcome news: "Big feller wind 'e come"! which marks the only occasion that I was glad to hear that "a big feller wind" was coming. We anchored in the early hours of the following morning, and at dawn I landed. Ere the dinghy touched the beach the jungled shore sprang into life. Natives broke out from the tangled scrub. Some were armed with spears and clubs, others carried baskets of produce. These people were cannibals, but their appearance was neither ferocious nor menacing; they possess a poor physique and an uncouth morose mien. I bartered with them for yams, paw-paw, bananas, eggs and sugar-cane, while the crew replenished our water-supply. Later I went to explore inland, but the crew advised me not to go far, since a village had just been raided; so I decided not to be too inquisitive and visited only one village, a wretched

hamlet surrounded by forbidding jungle. It was a sinister place of grim shadows, suggestive of all that is wildest in Nature. The male inhabitants were sitting about the village fully armed. They eyed me with suspicion, and remembering the story of two native policemen, who landed in this district to collect taxes and were killed and eaten for their pains, and that these islanders were notoriously antagonistic to the Government, I retired and felt somewhat relieved to be aboard the boat, having enriched my collection of studies with nothing more than a brief pencil note, of majestic trees heavily festooned with vines. As we slipped along the imposing coast, at various points small boys paddled out on rafts composed of four logs lashed together. These flimsy craft were frequently half submerged; they came alongside to barter produce, and since their rates were less than half of prevailing Trobriand prices, I took all they had and sent them for more. Then some of the adults came out on similar craft, but prices commenced to soar, and since for many reasons painting in this district was obviously impractical, I put about for home, satisfied that for my work the Trobriands offered the greatest scope.

II

En route we overhauled a fleet of some thirty Dobuan canoes bound on a Kula expedition. With their golden sails, pennants of pandanus leaf, red and black paintwork, and the superstructure that overhung their sterns, they had the appearance of a fleet of miniature galleons. Conch shells were blown and, as seems to be the custom at sea the world over, greetings were exchanged as we raced past them. They were bound primarily for the Amphletts, where other vessels were to join them before they made the final stages of their journey. At Gumasila, a canoe came out to inquire for news of the Dobuans, and the beach was a scene of considerable activity. They were loading a number of

canoes with their earthenware pots, and it is surprising what a large cargo of these heavy articles their flimsy craft can carry. In some instances I understand they can stow over a hundred, and some of these cauldrons are very large. It is these cooking pots which I have referred to in marriage customs and which are to be found in every Trobriand home. We anchored at Vakuta, the southernmost island of the Trobriands, but here, curiously enough, news of the Dobuan fleet had preceded us, and preparations were afoot for their reception. Although this island is only separated from the main island by a narrow channel and the inhabitants are characteristically Trobriand, in minor respects there is a marked difference, paramount of which is the absence of chieftainship; the women's skirts are much longer and simpler, being based on Dobuan, not Trobriand, models; their canoes are larger and more ornate; and their seamanship is considered superior to the Kiriwinans. In pre-Government days the Vakutans used to make frequent raids on the northerners; they in their turn were raided by the Dobuans, and possibly other tribes to the south of them. And it is on Vakuta that the first artist-craftsman in the Trobriands lives, although Boitalu on Kiriwina is the centre of this industry.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE VALLEY OF DEATH

ALTHOUGH IT IS ONLY a matter of a few miles to the eastern side of the island, some of the people in this district speak a distinct dialect, which I experienced some difficulty in understanding. This is a sparsely populated area, lacking the animation and life of the populous agricultural districts. I was *en route* for the Bone Caves, the Trobriand Valley of Death. Upon the way I called in at a hut for a meal; it was the residence of a gentleman of rank. The front end of the house was divided off into a small rectangular room about 10 ft. wide by 5 ft. broad by 5 ft. high, connected with the main living-room by a minute door. The floor of this diminutive apartment was raised about 3 ft. from the ground, the floor of the main living-room, as with all Trobriand huts, being on the ground level. A fire was lit underneath the small room, which in a few minutes became filled with choking smoke. This did not trouble my host; in fact, he appeared to think that I was delighted with his demonstration of hospitality. A wooden platter of steaming taitu was placed before me; as an acknowledgment of this courtesy, I resolved to endure the atmosphere. While I ate, the old gentleman passed flattering remarks about my bare legs. I gave the old fellow the customary return gift of tobacco, thanked him and continued my journey. The track led through the edge of a swamp. The path ascends steeply, following an intricate course between small precipices and towering outcrops; giant

fiscus trees spread their gnarled roots writhing across the track like enormous snakes. For hundreds of yards it became almost impossible to obtain a foothold upon the smooth-knobbed and moss-grown surface of the coral ridge, which in one place ascends vertically to a considerable height. A slip meant disaster ; and it is dangerous to make mistakes in the wilds. I stumbled through this rough defile ; in many places being obliged to haul myself up with my hands. Eventually I reached the summit, and the sea suddenly broke into view : so brilliant was it, that all sense of distance was lost. It sparkled between the dark foliage and hanging vines, having the effect of a stained-glass window. A declivity leads down to the beach and village of Wawela, the most beautiful lagoon on Kiriwina; it stretches for two miles a sheet of pure emerald, the foam curling upon the fringing reefs, beyond it the deep blue sea. The rugged cliffs of the island of Kitava lay stretched across the horizon. This island is the scene of the ancient myth [1] of the flying canoe.

Wawela is renowned for the beautifully carved fishing-net floats, and they appear to be the only people that use floats of this nature. The village faces due south-east, receiving the full force of the South-East Trades ; although this wind is regarded as invigorating, the Wawelans possess an exceptionally poor physique and are fast dying out, whereas villages which are sheltered from the south-east and situated near swamps are populous and the inhabitants are healthy.

For two miles I followed the desolate rugged shore, clambering over boulders and decayed tree-trunks, wading through the surf where the high tide washed the densely jungled shore. I asked my boy where the Bone Caves were ; he, apprehensive of black magic, assumed ignorance, neither could I persuade him to accompany me on my quest. I scrambled through the tangled scrub and matted under-

[1] See Mythology.

growth, whose crawling tendrils clung round my legs. Loathsome insects scuttered from underfoot; little shining monstrosities of repulsive shapes. I cut through the dark forbidding wall of hanging vines and dense bush, which terminated abruptly; ponderous overhanging crags obstructed further progress. A black cavity opened in the coral ridge; suddenly a flash of lightning revealed skulls that peered from every recess in the caverns. At its base, human bones lay mouldering in a tumbled heap; a snake reared its head from behind a skull, its body glistening as it caught the light. With a roar the thunder burst overhead. I stopped for shelter in one of the noisome holes; where the slanting rock met the ground, a gleaming white skull leered at me. I slided in the rank moss; my foot sent a skull rolling. Thus in this sinister gloom I was forced to remain until the storm cleared.

These bones are the scared remains of warriors; it is tabu for women to gaze upon them. It had been mooted that the R.M. was bringing his wife; when the project was discovered, the natives buried the gruesome relics in secret places. I endeavoured to discover where, but the natives would not divulge the place of concealment. That night I camped at a trader's house in Sinaketa. The following morning a Kula expedition arrived. With a great fanfare of conch shells, wild shouts, pandanus-leaf pennants and calicoes fluttering, a large fleet of canoes swung up out of the mist, the gaily bedecked crews lustily paddling shorewards. Ere the canoes touched the beach, with excited shouts the captains (Toliwaga) leapt ashore and with a flourish of paddles ran up the beach to the chief's house, but he was "not at home" to them. The same night there was a scrimmage, but the trouble was over a girl, whom one of the crowd had endeavoured to abduct. Hearing the uproar, I went into the village. In the impenetrable darkness I could only feel and hear people round me; it was like endeavouring to walk through a black velvet curtain.

How they could see to strike each other in that obscurity was extraordinary, but provided they could hit somebody presumably that was all that mattered, though at the present time Trobriand fights are mostly lung-power contests, but in this instance there were a great number of Dobuans present. Flames sprang up against the night, revealing red and yellow creatures painted with fictitious brilliance by the illumination. Tomahawks and knives flashed in the lurid brilliance; I quietly disappeared and left them.

I desired a canoe to take me back to my headquarters, and sent my boy to the village with a message. They sent a courteous reply that they couldn't take me, because they were working in their gardens—work that had been finished a month previously; and knowing this, I was very annoyed with the excuse. That night, armed with a walking-stick and a hurricane lamp, I went into the village; the blackness was as dense as on the previous night. When they caught sight of my lamp they crowded round to inspect it, and were greatly fascinated, particularly with the scarlet bull's-eye at the back of the lamp. One Dobuan asked a Sinaketan who I was; this latter proceeded to give an illuminating description of my work, at length and in detail. He had all the qualities of a Press agent. Their admiration for my lamp did not cool my annoyance. I had been delayed; my stores had run out; I was anxious to get back to the studio. They would not let me have a canoe; I could not swim fifteen miles—very well! I mounted the platform of a yam house and called out all the inhabitants of the village, who collected round in a semicircle. Then somebody laughed, which increased my annoyance, and I swore in their language and my own, haranguing the multitude until I was out of breath, then I impressively stalked out of the village. I thought I made rather an imposing figure—anyway I obtained the canoe.

PLATE 29.—ANOTHER LITTLE GIRL.

Painted for a feast. Although the facial decorations of both children and adults are frequently very elaborate, it is, however, impracticable to illustrate them, since it would give a false impression of the actual effect.

To face p. 216.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

AND SO HOME!

THERE CAME A TIME AT LAST when various facts reminded me that my sojourn in the Trobriands could not last for ever. I should have to return to civilisation.

The first sign came when I had reached my last pair of boots and the soles began to come away from the uppers. The Trobrianders, of course, are happy enough with the shoes that Nature has given them: the half-inch of thick skin on the soles of their feet is practically impervious to injury and will last a lifetime. But, alas, I am differently made. Boots I must have. And leather is not found on the Trobriand Islands, the only feasible substitute being the skin of the wallaby, an animal which proves singularly elusive. For a time I managed to shuffle along with the soles of my boots tied on with string, like a pair of sandals, but frequently the string would slip and trip me up, and then the inhabitants would shout with glee at the acrobatic Taubada. And I would once more remember the advantages of living in a civilized community.

Then came a further and even more pressing difficulty. The heap of tobacco which I had brought with me began to run out. It was my working capital, the foundation of my housekeeping accounts, and in fact the basis of my very existence in those islands. The Trobrianders are by nature a very honest people; but the idea of giving credit to an impoverished Taubada with no visible means of subsistence

does not appeal to them. No tobacco, no *kai kai*, is their infringible creed, and I could not even establish a credit on their Kula or Wasi system.[1] As has been done by many a better man than I in similarly unfortunate circumstances, I tried to strengthen my credit by keeping up appearances : wherever I went I kept my few remaining sticks of tobacco protruding ostentatiously from my pocket. But this did not work. Suspicion was attached to me, and it stuck. Even my " cash payments " were distrusted ; and rightly, perhaps, for I could not afford to be over-generous, and this, in a country where goods are not definitely priced, was quickly noticed. One vendor, to whom I tendered a minute piece of tobacco in payment, rubbed it against his chin, in sarcastic suggestion that it was necessary to file the stick in case I had given him over-weight !

Of course I tried to economise. One always does, and the result is always the same.

After two months on restricted rations, a new supply of tobacco, ordered from Samarai, came to hand. But it was then too late. Circumstances were against me. A drought had set in, food was scarce, and no one was willing to sell what he would need for himself. For two days, with my now useless wealth, I went on trek through the villages in search of food. I secured a few vegetables and a small quantity of fruit and eggs, and some fish and oysters. But of what use are oysters to a starving man ?

Then kind traders and missionaries lent me rice and odd stores, but obviously to continue living in such a way was out of the question. I broke the news to Dobu, who was kind enough to show that he at least had faith in me, by an assurance that " More better you stop long New Guinea, Taubada." I explained that I had business in Dim Dim. " No matter, Taubada," he replied ; " more better you stop."

[1] In the Kula exchange it might be a year before the equivalent return is made ; in the Wasi or ceremonial exchange of vegetables or fish sometimes the vegetables are paid in advance, the fishermen making their return later.

Then I told him that "father, mother, altogether people belong me stop Dim Dim." This to him (and to any Papuan) was an entirely sufficient reason for my desire to return home. And then I arranged my departure. But it was some weeks after I had packed before there was a schooner to take me to Samarai.

It was, I fear, an inglorious end to a great adventure. But the end had to come sometime, and perhaps the manner of my going in part consoled me for what I was leaving. For in going back to the bustling world, with its motor-cars, its wireless, express trains and yelling newsboys, was I not leaving the most gorgeous colouration in the world, a country of romance, the Arcadia of a primitive but fascinating people ?

APPENDIX

THE MYTHOLOGY OF PAPUA, as I have indicated, is extremely elaborate. Many of the rites are based upon legends, in which the islanders firmly believe. Some of these may be given here.

I

In the village of Dogura there lived a fisherman who was peculiarly successful with his nets. However poor might be the catch, this man always came back with as many fish as he could carry, even when his companions returned empty-handed. Thinking that his nets might possess magic, the other men substituted theirs for his; but their catch was no better, although he, with their nets, was just as successful as before. The lucky fisherman would not explain his secret, and his rivals set to work to discover it. They noticed that this fisherman always went apart from the others, and accordingly they set a small boy to follow him and watch, without letting himself be seen.

Followed by the boy, the man set out till he was some two miles from where he had left his companions. After looking carefully to see that he was not observed, he proceeded—to the horror of the watching child—to take off his head! Then, leaving the head on the shore, he waded into the sea, and bent down until his neck was submerged. Hundreds of fish swarmed through the aperture of his neck into his body, and when it was full he returned to the shore, emptied out the fish, restored his head to its normal position, and returned to the village with the captured fish in his net.

The terror-stricken boy reported what he had seen, but, naturally enough, he was not believed. The elders accordingly deputed one of their number to take the boy's place. This time, when the fisherman had removed his head and waded into the water, the elder rushed down to the beach, snatched up the head and flung it far into the jungle. The headless man later returned to the beach with his catch and began to search for the head. He could not find it, and after a long while he died.

On the spot where the head had fallen when it was flung into the jungle there grew the first coco-nut tree, and coco-nut trees have flourished ever since.

If you do not believe this story, you are invited to look at a coco-nut: at one end of it you will find three rounds spots—the eyes and mouth of the unfortunate fisherman.

II

Once upon a time all the Papuan people spoke the same language. But in those days they were very quarrelsome, the cause of their dissension being the ownership of a large tree that was so tall that even the flying-witches could not reach the top of it. The strife over this tree grew so acute that at last the ruler issued a proclamation that on a certain day the whole tribe was to assemble on the beach to see the tree cut down. With a terrific splash it fell into the sea, and as the leaves touched the water the amazed populace saw them transformed into fish. Now, these people were passionately fond of fish, and when they saw what was happening they rushed into the water and proceeded to eat the leaf-created fishes. But the fish were of many species, and according to the kind which each native ate so did his speech alter. At first, when they found that they could not understand one another, they did not know what to do, but eventually they discovered that all those who had eaten the same species could speak a similar tongue. So accordingly they formed themselves into tribes and went to live in different districts, where they remain to this day.

III

At Wedau, a village on the north-east coast, there is a plateau with a round hill in its centre. Long, long ago, a man went down to the sea to fish, but though he remained all day he caught nothing. He decided to make one final cast, and then he found something heavy on his line. He hauled it in, and to his amazement he found that he had caught an enormous snake. He pulled and pulled, going farther and farther back into the jungle, but still he could not see the farther end of the reptile. When at last he succeeded in pulling it out of the sea, he called the villagers to see what he had found. He was going to kill it, but one of the elders said: "No, let us keep it, for it will bring the other villagers to see it and we shall receive many yams from them as presents." This was done, but the great difficulty was to feed the enormous beast: it ate and ate and ate until eventually everyone in the village had to go short of food in order to feed it. At last when they were almost starving they decided to kill it, but by that time it had grown so big and strong that they did not know how to get rid of it. Many methods were suggested, but at last it was agreed that they should dig an enormous pit and cover it with yams. This was accomplished and the huge reptile, attracted by the food,

rushed at it and fell into the pit. Before the snake could recover, the people feverishly filled in the pit. The snake could not free itself, but in its struggles it pushed up the earth: and that is the origin of the mound at Wedau.

IV

When the world was still young, there was a great tree, so tall that its topmost branches were lost in the sky. In those days fish grew on trees as leaves, and whenever the tribe required fish all that was necessary was to gather them from this tree. There was one man who possessed such an enormous appetite that the lower branches of the tree did not provide enough fish to satisfy him, so he considered how he could reach the upper branches. There was only one way to do it, he decided, and that was to chop the tree down, which he did. The apex of the felled tree pointed north in the direction of the Trobriands. Directly it fell, the remaining fish swam off the branches, and ever since then fish have been plentiful in the sea that surrounds the Trobriands.

V

Once upon a time the Papuans were beset by an enormous giant who went through the country devouring everyone whom he could catch, until in time the population was threatened with extinction. The survivors assembled to devise some means of destroying the giant, and eventually after many adventures they succeeded in overcoming him. When this was accomplished they left the body on the ground with an old woman to watch over it and went off to celebrate their deliverance. After a while the old woman noticed that a stray dog was eating one of the dead giant's fingers with apparent relish, so she cut off a small piece of the giant and ate it, just to see what its taste would be. She found it good and told her friends about it, with the result that the giant's body was soon entirely eaten. Then it was discovered that different members of the tribe were developing different characteristics. This was traced to their eating of the giant: those who had eaten parts of the arms developed strength of arm, those who had devoured the legs became great runners, those who had eaten the liver became cowards, and so on. And thus did the various Papuan tribes acquire their distinguishing characteristics.

VI

There was a time when there lived in the village of Boera, in the central district of Papua, a hunchback named Edai Siabo. So hideous was he that none of the girls would have anything to

do with him, and everyone, even the piccaninnies when they were not too frightened, would turn and jeer at him. When the canoes set out for the fishing grounds, the wives and sweethearts of the fishermen would come to the beach to wish them good luck; but no one wished good speed to Edai Siabo, and he was very lonely and miserable. He was not even allowed on the best fishing grounds. One day, however, as he sat in his canoe feeling particularly wretched, the waters were rent apart and the huge hand of the Sea God, Dirava, appeared from the depths. It caught hold of Edai Siabo and dragged him down to the bottom of the ocean. Siabo was terrified, and struggled frantically, but the Sea God told him not to be alarmed. The god took a dish of sago from a hole in the coral and told Edai Siabo to eat it. The hunchback imagined that it was *puri-puri*; but he dared not disobey. To his surprise he found the sago good to taste and apparently harmless. "Now," said the Sea God, "do exactly what I shall tell you, in great secrecy, and good fortune will attend you"; and Dirava proceeded to tell him how to build a strange kind of canoe, the like of which had never been seen before. He was then, said the god, to fill the craft with earthenware pots and sail in the direction of the setting sun till he reached a certain village.

Edai Siabo went back to his village, wondering how the building of such a huge craft as had been described to him would be possible, but he feared to disobey the god, and when he set to work he found that he had become imbued with a superhuman strength so that he could lift enormous logs as easily as if they had been feathers. Then he was happy, for he knew that the god had meant what he had said and that good fortune awaited him on the completion of his task. The work progressed rapidly, although the villagers thought that he had lost his reason, since they could not believe that so large a canoe would float. Nevertheless Edai Siabo persevered and eventually was able to launch the canoe, which was, as a matter of fact, the first lakatoi. Even the weight of the earthenware pots made in the village did not sink the craft, and Edai set sail with a light heart.

After many moons he reached the village which had been described to him by Dirava; but there the inhabitants set upon him and wanted to kill him. But the elders of the village, which was called Wamea, wisely decided that nothing would be served by killing the hunchback, whereas he could be made very useful to them, for they needed the pots that he had brought and would need more if he could go back to where he had come from and bring them some more. Edai Siabo said that he had brought the pots to exchange them for sago, and that if the people of Wamea would fill his great craft with this food he would return in the following year with a fresh supply of pots, to be exchanged in the same way. This was duly arranged, and Edai Siabo returned

home. Thanks to the sago, supplies of which he obtained in the same way every year without telling anyone of his secret, he became very wealthy and a power in the land. Jeers were no longer levelled at him and he won universal respect, and in time he married the prettiest girl in the village.

This, then, is the origin of the trading between Boera in the east and Wamea in the west, which is carried on to this day ; and it is also the reason why the lakatoi is depicted to-day on the Papuan postage stamps.

VII

In far-off days the men of Kitava decided to embark upon a great Kula expedition. On Kitava there are five villages. The people of four of these villages set about constructing canoes for the expedition in the usual way, taking the various parts to the coast and there lashing them together. But Mokatuboda, the chief of the village of Kudayuri, ordered his people to build their canoe in their own village, which is situated in a valley some three hundred feet above the level of the sea. The canoe builders asked how such a vessel could be carried down to the sea, but Mokatuboda bade them do as he commanded. When the canoe was completed, the chief ordered the sail to be hoisted, although the craft rested on dry land far from the sea. Then he ordered the people to load the canoe and take their places, which they did, obeying their chief although they thought him mad.

The Mokatuboda performed magic over the canoe, and with a magic staff struck away the canoe skids and knocked both ends off the craft with his adze. He then leapt into the canoe, and immediately it rose in the air, as if raised by invisible hands, and flew. If a rock stood in the track, the craft pierced the rock ; if a tree was in the way, the tree was struck down.

The new flying canoe was, of course, a great success and the envy of everyone who saw it. In particular Mokatuboda's relatives were very jealous of him, and at last one of them, Towengrei, killed him, thinking to inherit his magic. But Towengrei's canoe would not fly, for the power of magic could only be given as a gift. Towengrei was very disappointed and very angry when he saw that he had killed his brother in vain ; but still more angry were his three sisters. These sisters soon found that life with Towengrei was impossible, so they ran away, one to the west, one through a new sea passage to the west of the Trobriands, and one to Simsim, one of the Lousanay Islands, where she was turned into stone her petrified body remaining in the sea to this day.

GLOSSARY

Amphletts : A group of islands north of the d'Entrecasteaux group : the inhabitants are famed for their fine pottery.

Bagi : Necklaces exchanged in the Kula.
Baku : The clear space in the centre of a village.
Baloma : Spirits of the Trobriand dead.
Bau Bau : A bamboo pipe ; a small piece of tobacco given to the natives before they commence pearling.
Bêche-de-mer—the Trepang : Fishing trepang is an unpleasant but profitable occupation. They are disembowelled and smoked-dried, and are shipped to China, where they are regarded as a great delicacy and realise handsome prices. The Trobrianders fish for this sea slug to trade with Europeans, but rarely, if ever, eat it themselves.
Beku : Stone adze-head ; an article of native wealth.
Boera : A village in the Central Division.
Boima : A yam store.
Bootless Inlet : A mining district (copper), fourteen miles east of Port Moresby.
Baroque : Seed pearls.
Bwaga'u : An evil spirit.
Bwebweso : A mountain on Normanby Island and spirit-world of the Dobuans.

" Calicoes " : Pidgin-English for European cloths, bed-linen, etc. ; the loin-cloth worn by native employées.
Conch shell : Blown on ceremonial and other important occasions.
Copra : The dried meat of coco-nuts.

Dirava : A sea god (Myth').
Dobu : A small island in Dawson Strait on the north-west of Normanby Island, and centre of a powerful and influential tribe (Dobuans).
Dodoleta : Leaves used in garden magic.
Doga : An ornament held in the mouth by the Kasawaga dancers.
Doga : Circular tusk of the wild boar exchanged in the Kula ; usually worn as a pendant to a necklace.
Duku : A heavy vine used for hauling canoes.

Edai Siabo : A mythological hero.

Fergusson Island : One of the d'Entrecasteaux group.

Gigipwala : A coastal village on Normanby Island.
Ginigini : To draw, paint, write.
Guba : An oyster net ; also used when "swimming fish."
Guiau : A chief.
Gumasila : An island of the Amphlett group.
Gumilibaba : The largest village in the Trobriands, with a population of three hundred.

Hanuabada : Big village ; a village near Port Moresby.

Igau : By and by.

Kabwaku : An important inland village, under the rule of Moliasi.
Kaibola : A village on the north of Kiriwina.
Kaiboma : A wooden food bowl ; the rim is invariably ornately carved.
Kaidebu : An ornately carved shield formerly used in dances which are now no longer performed.
Kaigigi'u : A wooden pump drill, with a stone point, used for drilling *sapi sapi*.
Kai kai : Food, a meal, a common expression used throughout the South Seas.
Kailata : A fishing net, used in pairs.
Kailipoulo : Medium-sized canoes, used mainly for fishing, and carrying a crew of from six to twelve hands.
Kainawa : A large wooden spatula used in the cooking of the ceremonial dish, *mona*.
Kainsoba : A decoration which is held in the hands by the singers and dancers in certain of their performances.
Kaitutu : A wooden utensil used for the preparation of the ceremonial dish, *mona*.
Kaituwaika : A toy in the form of a wooden disc at which the children throw spears.
Kaiwo'u : A small canoe ; a light handy craft sometimes only capable of carrying one man.
Kaloma : A spondylus shell, of a rich pink, from which *sapi sapi* is made.
Kasawaga : A trio of dancers.
Katuyausi : Love-making expeditions.
Kerewa : A tribe in the Delta Division.
Kikita vivila : A little girl.
Kitava : The most easterly island of the Trobriand group.

Kiriwina : The largest island of the Trobriand group ; also the name of a district on this island.
Kiwai : An island in the Fly River.
Kova : A fire-stick.
Kula : Exchange of native wealth—*vaygu'a* ; this interchange of *vaygu'a* covers a wide area, embracing many tribes.

Lalang : A tall grass, used for many purposes, but mainly for roofing and working skirts.
Lapi : A pearl oyster.

Mailu : A tribe in the Central Division.
Manibush : A corruption of " bushman," meaning a stupid person.
Masawa : An ocean-going canoe largely employed in overseas expeditions : length from 20 to 30 or more feet.
Metakata : Chief of Gumilibaba.
Milamala : The harvest festival and opening of the dance season.
Moliasi : Chief of Kabwaku and rival of To'uluwa.
Mona : A ceremonial dish.
Motu : A tribe in the Central Division.
Mulukwausi : Flying-witches.
M'wali : Arm-shells made from a large conus shell ; these arm-shells are regarded as extremely valuable and the most important articles of *vaygu'a* in the Kula exchange.

" New Guinea dynamite " : A root (*tuha*) used for catching fish.
Noku : A root used in the manufacture of dye for skirts.
Normanby Island : One of the d'Entrecasteaux group.

Port Moresby : The largest European settlement in Papua, and seat of the Administration.
Puri-Puri : Poison ; to cast a spell ; magic good or evil, but chiefly associated with the latter.

Rogeia : An island near Samarai.

Sagali : A feast.
Samarai : A white settlement at the eastern end of Papua, with a population of approximately one hundred and thirty Europeans.
Sanaroa : An island of the d'Entrecasteaux group.
Sapi sapi : Pink shell discs ; an important medium of barter, and are currency throughout Papua.
Sariba : An island near Samarai.
Sinabada : Mistress ; white woman.
Sinaketa : A Trobriand village.
Senibara : A *danse au ventre.*
Soulava : Necklaces of *sapi sapi* exchanged in the Kula.

Tabula : Longitudinal prow-board.
Taralwai : The plucking of feathers from the performers of dances and songs as a mark of appreciation.
Taubada : Master ; white man.
Taurai : A vegetable used in the ceremonial dish, *mona*.
Teavi : A Trobriand village.
Tokway : Spirits that dwell in trees.
Tokwaybagula : An industrious and efficient worker ; particularly associated with agriculture.
Toliwaga : Owner or captain of a canoe.
Topileta : The supreme deity of the Trobriand spirit-world.
To'uluwa : The supreme chief of the Trobriands, resident in the village of Omarakana.
Tuha : A poisonous root used in fishing.
Tukwalu : A wooden figure, over which magic is performed to protect the owner from assassination ; also used as protection from the influence of evil spirits, for which purpose a figure is frequently introduced in the decoration of yam houses and on the prow-boards of canoes, etc.
Tukwaukwa : A Trobriand village.
Tuma : An island of the Trobriand group, and abiding-place of the spirits of the Trobriand dead.
Tuwau : A vegetable used in the ceremonial dish, *mona*.

Ulaula : A root used in garden magic.

Vakuta : One of the Trobriand group, separated from the main island of Kiriwina by a narrow channel.
Vaygu'a : Native valuables : mainly arm-shells, *sapi sapi*, necklaces, axe-heads, curved tusks of boars, etc.
Vivila : An unmarried girl.

Waga : A canoe ; a general term for boats and canoes.
Waituna : Pearls.
Waiwaia : A spirit from whom the women believe they receive their children.
Wamea : A village in the Western Division.
Wawela : A Trobriand coastal village, renowned for beautifully carved floats to their fishing net. The home of flying-witches.
Wasi : The ceremonial exchange of fish for vegetables.

Yams : A tuber of which there are several varieties ; the meat is similar to potatoes.
Yari yari : Intoxicated ; stupefied.

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